

Don't quote me, I might have meant it

A problem for us Commons commentators is to know which MPs utterances count. Take Kenneth Clarke on Wednesday: taunting Gordon Brown over Labour's "windfall tax", the Chancellor asked which industries would be targeted. Gas, he asked? Electricity? Scottish water or just English water? To protests, Mr Clarke spluttered: "They're all privatised."

Scottish water is not privatised. Amid the squeals and howls, Mr Clarke said he did not mean Scottish water. So do we report a "gaffe" — or is his correction judged to have come in time? Mr Clarke was quick last year (though not as quick) to correct his compli-

ment to Consett's steel industry and nappy factory (both defunct), but the remarks were seized upon in time to become a media "fact". Wednesday's proto-gaffe never did, but you can hear it on the tapes.

Yesterday, Mr Clarke found himself tangled once more in the verbal thickets. Whether or not he meant to give the Tory backbencher John Townend (Bridlington) the advice which follows, I heard him give it. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said: "... and now the pound is strengthening, strongly. It is not — still — back at an acceptable level, because it is going back to where it was two years ago" [my italics].

Economically illiterate



MATTHEW PARRIS

POLITICAL SKETCH

though I am, I doubt whether it was widely known that Mr Clarke has a target for the value of the pound, and that a recovery to where the currency was two years ago falls short of it. Nobody in the Chamber seemed to be listening, however. And few but this court-jester seemed to be writing it down. So I suppose he didn't say it?

It's a mistake to write things down. Labour has found a transcript of something Mr Clarke once said on BBC local radio (in Nottingham), whose

drift was that, if we could start again, we would have VAT on everything. Mr Brown quoted this on Wednesday but, strangely, Mr Clarke did not seem to hear him.

John Austin-Walker (Lab. Woolwich) repeated it during PM's Questions yesterday. Before this, Labour backbenchers tried raising it with the junior Treasury minister Philip Oppenheim.

Mr Oppenheim (an unexpected success story among the newer appointments — sharp, brutal and quick, a

thinking man's yobbo) ignored the question and tore into Labour, fists flying, on another matter. The Prime Minister adopted a different approach when asked about the remark, being afflicted with a sudden deafness.

John Major went on to quote another remark an MP must wish had never been committed to print: Labour spokesman Nigel Griffiths last year described Scottish Nationalist proposals to reduce VAT on heating as "another cynical ploy from an increasingly opportunistic and desperate party". On Wednesday, Labour had adopted these very proposals. What did the Opposition say to that?

All at once, it was Labour's

front bench who developed hearing difficulties.

If we agreed an amnesty on writing things down, the Commons would be less stressful. I managed to note Mr Major's response to Elizabeth Peacock (C. Batley & Spen), who had asked him to congratulate innovators in industry in Yorkshire. "I'm certainly happy to congratulate successful innovators in Yorkshire," crooned the PM. Then, perhaps judging this too paltry a contribution, added: "And undoubtedly many of them have been very successful."

Gibberish? Of course. Therein lies Mr Major's cunning. Nobody can take that down and use it in evidence against him.

Healey weighs into cautious Brown on tax and spending

By Alice Thomson, Political Reporter

LORD HEALEY, Labour's last Chancellor of the Exchequer, yesterday attacked Gordon Brown for the second time in 48 hours and criticised his caution on tax and spending.

He said that Labour should have the courage to raise taxes if it wanted a "decent health service". Later he tried to play down his comments, claiming he had been misled by the interviewer about Mr Brown's criticism of him.

Earlier this week Lord Healey, Chancellor from 1974 to 1979, made an outspoken attack on a European single currency, saying it would be a disaster for Britain and could lead to riots on the streets. His broadside against monetary union has stirred up arguments in the Shadow Cabinet over whether a future Labour government should join the first wave of monetary union.

"If the thing goes ahead it will be a disaster," Lord Healey said in the Lords.

Yesterday afternoon Lord Healey appeared unrepentant when he went on BBC2's *Westminster* with Nick Ross programme, despite the Labour hierarchy making it clear it did not welcome disunity.

Lord Healey said: "I think Gordon Brown has become a little too rigid in some respects and of course he has got no government experience whatsoever."

He added: "Mr Brown has become a little too cautious about spending commitments."



Healey said he was misled by interviewer

I believe myself that it is not necessarily the end of the world if a party wanting power says it will raise taxes enough to have a decent health service and education service. I don't see how any government after the next election will get through without raising some taxes because we can't go on with this colossal deficit."

Mr Brown had tried to brush aside Lord Healey's remarks to the Lords as the views of a backbencher. He said: "Denis Healey is an interesting and always controversial figure. I always read his remarks with a great deal of interest. He's not speaking from the Labour front bench and doesn't pretend to do so."

"Our policy on the single

currency has not changed and will not change. We see the advantages in principle to the British economy. The decision, however, will be made at the time in what we consider to be the national interest."

Lord Healey was asked whether he thought Mr Brown's comments were a put-down. He replied: "I look forward to the day when Gordon Brown can put me down."

Late last night Lord Healey published a letter of complaint to the BBC, claiming he had been misled.

He said: "In an interview earlier today Jon Sopel told me that Gordon Brown had delivered a put-down of me at a press conference. I then made a series of remarks which were reported as a major attack on Gordon."

"I subsequently learnt what Gordon actually said. In no way could it be described as a put-down."

Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, did his best to exploit Labour's embarrassment over the incident.

He said: "We have been saying for months that Gordon Brown has the wrong answers to the key economic questions of the day. Now Denis Healey has revealed that Gordon Brown doesn't even understand the questions."

Cost of EMU, page 11
Tim Congdon, page 20



Geoffrey Glave, one of the former constables who won his appeal, at his Derbyshire home yesterday

Trauma

Continued from page 1

ing. They have a month to file their petition.

The four who won were Inspector Henry White and constables Edward Bairstow, Anthony Bevis and Geoffrey Glave. Only Mr Bairstow is still in the force. Sergeant Janet Smith lost her appeal when the judges said that what she did was no more than could properly be asked of any police officer in the ordinary carrying out of her duties.

Lord Justice Rose, sitting with Lords Justices Henry and Judge, said the real difference between Hillsborough and other incidents was the failure of the police to control the fans. Lord Justice Henry agreed and said he knew many people felt it as fundamentally unjust for police to get damages for post-traumatic stress disorder while some of the relatives were turned down.

He said the court could only consider whether these plaintiffs should receive on the different principles of law applicable to them. In a dissenting judgment, Lord Justice Judge said he would have dismissed all the appeals. He said rescuers should not automatically be regarded as "primary victims" of the negligence and therefore entitled to sue.

Secondary victims could only recover damages if they had a close relationship with someone killed or injured, or if they were in such close proximity to the events that psychiatric injury was foreseeable. These criteria were not satisfied in this case.

Last year the Law Commission also called for a more liberal interpretation of who can claim damages. It called for lifting the requirements of physical and temporal proximity and also the need to perceive the accident directly through "unaided senses."

Paper worker jailed for having knife Moral battlefield

By Stewart Tendler

A PRINT worker who uses a knife as a tool of his trade was jailed yesterday after police found three blades in his car.

The imprisonment of Dean Payne, 26, for two weeks is likely to add fresh heat to the debate over calls for a ban on some types of knives. Payne, from Notting Hill, west London, is the first defendant to be jailed under the new Offensive Weapons Act.

The Act, brought in last July, raised the penalties for carrying a knife in public without good reason to two years' imprisonment or an unlimited fine, or both. Last night Lady Olga Maitland, the architect of the Act, defended the court's action and said it would have been difficult to claim that two of the knives were for work. She

Michael Howard has agreed to all-party talks on banning the sale of combat knives and will also consider laws to restrict aggressive advertising of the weapons. The Home Secretary plans to meet the Advertising Standards Authority to see how it could do more to check the language of mail-order advertisements. He has also written to Jack Straw, the shadow Home Secretary, and Alex Carlile, Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesman, agreeing to meet them to discuss their proposals and the practical difficulties involved in a crackdown.

said: "He totally failed to convince the court that he was carrying them for a lawful purpose. I think popping him in prison for two weeks is more effective than giving him a heavy fine. He will remember the two weeks."

Marylebone Magistrates' Court was told that Payne worked as a part-time newspaper distribution worker and used a knife to cut bound bundles of newspapers. He

have to view your conduct not only in the light of your own circumstances, but also in the light of the great public fear of people going around with knives.

"There is no evidence before me that you were intending to use the knives for offensive purposes. Nevertheless, three knives were found in your possession in a public place and I consider that the only proper penalty is one depriving you of your liberty."

Payne told the court that casual workers were not provided with knives, or lockers to store them in, and therefore had to carry their own tools.

"You turn up with your knife on you, or you don't work," he said. He was aware of the publicity about having knives in public, but had not realised that the interior of his car could count as a public place.

Continued from page 1

that Labour is so far ahead on the morality issue, which seems certain to dominate politics over the coming months, is a blow to the Conservatives.

The survey shows opinion divides clearly on party lines, though only 56 per cent of Tory supporters think their own party would be most likely to implement these proposals. The rest either think the opposition parties would be best or do not know. By contrast, nearly three-quarters of Labour supporters, including more than a half of those who have switched behind the party since 1992, believe it would be most likely to put the ideas into practice.

The latest MORI poll, undertaken over last weekend, also highlights increased, and record levels of, public con-

cern over law and order and education. Law and order is, for the first time, top of the public's list of most important issues facing Britain today, mentioned by 41 per cent, against 27 per cent a month ago. Close behind is education — at 39 per cent up from 32 per cent in late September.

By contrast for the first time since June 1991 unemployment is not top of the public's list of most important issues, having slipped to third thanks to a strong economy, rising living standards and falling unemployment.

Labour yesterday sought to capitalise on government difficulties by bringing forward a £12 million advertising campaign proclaiming "enough is enough."

Peter Riddell, page 11
Letters, page 21

NEWS IN BRIEF

Employment Service to shed 1,700 jobs

More than 1,700 jobs are to go in the Employment Service in cost-cutting plans disclosed yesterday by the Department for Education and Employment. The plans to axe jobs by the end of the decade will halve the present head-office staffing level and aim to save £70 million. A spokeswoman said the cuts were being implemented to make the service "more focused and business-orientated". David Blunkett, Shadow Employment Secretary, condemned the cuts as "frankly outrageous". He said they were so sweeping that they would disable the service.

Growth hormone deaths

Donald Spear, 33, a motorcycle courier from Hemel Hempstead, died on Tuesday of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, caused by infected human growth hormone. Heather Causton, another victim of the same treatment, died yesterday. A 52-year-old woman has become the second person in France to die of the new form of CJD.

New salmonella threat

A new form of salmonella food poisoning is rising sharply. The agent responsible is distinct from the one that infected eggs and chickens, and which is now in decline. The new threat comes from a form that is resistant to antibiotics. Dr John Cowden of the Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health writes in the *British Medical Journal*.

Nurse cleared of sabotage

A nurse was cleared of trying to harm a patient by sabotaging a machine at Basildon hospital in Workson, Nottinghamshire. Amanda Jenkinson, 37, was said to have stopped the flow of a sedative to Brenda Joyce, 61. She still faces two similar charges. A jury at Nottingham Crown Court will continue its deliberations today.

Men can still behave badly

Martin Clunes and Neil Morrissey, right, were told they could carry on behaving badly in spite of complaints about their show. The Broadcasting Standards Council cleared *Men Behaving Badly* of being "gratuitous and unfunny". But the council said that the award-winning BBC comedy had "come very close to the limit of acceptability". Some viewers had complained that dream sequences in one episode were excessively violent and not funny. The BBC said it had broadcast a warning before the episode, saying it was "not for the faint-hearted".



Rugby captain forgets date

Rob Wainwright, the Scotland rugby captain, forgot to attend the launch in Edinburgh of a Scottish Poppy Appeal event, which has the message "Remember" on its posters. He went to the gym instead of presenting a framed poster to Nicola Yule, 13. An appeal spokesman said: "Rob telephoned to say he was sorry. It just slipped his mind."

Five on book prize shortlist

The shortlist for the McVitie's Prize, for Scottish writers, was announced last night. It comprises: Alan Spence, *Stone Garden & Other Stories*; Shena Mackay, *The Orchard on Fire*; Andrew O'Hagan, *The Missing*; W.N. Herbert, *Cabaret Macdonagh*; and Alan Tormaid Campbell, *Getting to Know Wainait: An Amazonian Ethnography*.

Rare dinosaur fossil found

A 2in fossil exposed by storms near Brook Bay on the Isle of Wight is believed to be a 120-million-year-old broken claw from one of the rarest known flesh-eaters, the 3ft Baryonyx. The find was made by an amateur fossil hunter and has been shown to William Walker, who found the first baryonyx skeleton in 1983. Baryonyx, which means heavy claw, took its name from its murderously large and hook-like thumb claws. Its head was more than 3ft long and it had very sharp teeth designed to grip. The only other baryonyx fossil, another claw, was found in the Niger Republic.

Graduate donated organs

The family of Ian Tucker, 23, the Australian post-graduate at Oxford who died after a university rugby match last Saturday, donated seven of his organs for transplant. His college disclosed yesterday after a memorial service. Relatives, friends and students were among 350 mourners in the chapel at Keble College.

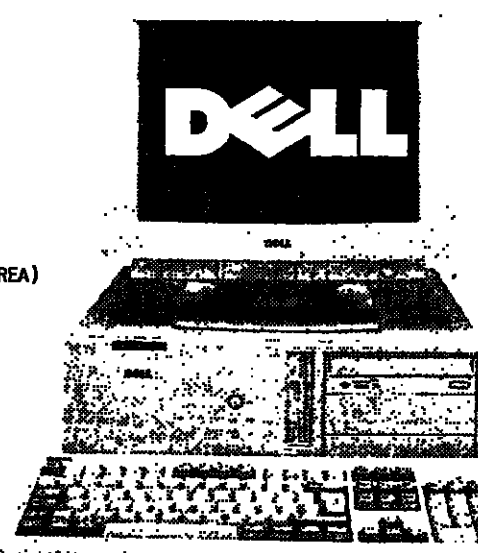
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The man who thrashed Major says it did him good



Major: received one of the best

By DAMIEN WHITWORTH

THE teacher who caned John Major said yesterday that he could not understand the Prime Minister's opposition to corporal punishment because it had done him good.

Hubert Walker, 83, recalled that he had dealt a single swish of the cane to Mr Major and 23 of his classmates when they refused to complete a homework assignment at Rudish school, Wimbledon, in the mid-1950s. "I think they learnt their lesson," he said last night.

He denied that the boys had been given six strokes and insisted that they had received only one each.

He added that, after the mass thrashing, the class of teenagers had behaved better. "I agree with corporal punishment," he said. "I think it should be brought back, not to be used willy-nilly, but rather via the headmaster in moderation."

Mr Walker came down firmly on the side of Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary, who was rebuked by the Prime Minister on Tuesday for suggesting that state schools might reintroduce the cane, in defiance of agreed Cabinet policy. The former geography teacher said: "Some sanction is necessary. When I stood in front of a class of 30 boys, if two decided to be a nuisance and disrupt the class,

that was a waste of time for the other 28. I insisted on being firm. That was the whole basis of my career. They must be suppressed."

"At present there is no sanction. If people can murder a headteacher I'm afraid the whole country is going down the drain. In my day my wife and mother could go out and walk in the dark and now they couldn't."

Mr Walker, who taught at Rudish for 30 years, retired in 1976 and lives in Raynes Park, south-west London, a short distance from the school. He is still in touch with many of the teachers and his former pupils, including some of those he caned. His educational

mentor was J.R. Blenkinsop, the cane-wielding headmaster at Rudish, who terrorised generations of boys including John Major, and was nicknamed Champion the Wonder Horse because of the size of his teeth.

Mr Walker said he hoped that Mr Major would be able to show much leadership. He was his own boss, he said, and he was in the dis-

corps. He had deterred why John Major said. Many Tory

puzzled yesterday after being reminded in *The Times* that, in 1986, Mr Major had sided with the Tory Right in a vote to keep the cane in schools with parental consent.

Mr Walker said that caning was more moderate than discipline had been in his own childhood. "My grandfather had a strap hanging beside the fireplace and he was prepared to use it if you stepped out of line."

The humiliation of Mr Major was the talk of the bar at the Old Rudishians Association last night. One contemporary of the Prime Minister said: "We used to wear a beating as a badge of honour. Most of us were caught at least once."

John Major must have kept his head down if he only got caned once. It would have been much worse if old Blenkinsop had beaten him. He swished the cane much harder, as I can recall to my cost."

Mr Major's misery at Rudish was such that he could not remember what the building looked like when he returned to the school in 1991 for a prizegiving. Peter Stokes, the chairman of the association, who was another contemporary, said: "I am not surprised he has forgotten all about the beating and the school. The school failed him. He got on in life after he left."

Education, page 38

Murderer is awarded legal aid to sue MoD

By RICHARD FORD

A MURDERER is suing the Ministry of Defence from his prison cell, claiming £100,000 for alleged physical and sexual molestation while a serving teenage soldier.

Adam Furry, 21, is one of eight former soldiers demanding compensation for alleged beatings and sexual attacks while stationed at a Staffordshire barracks for small firearms training. Furry, from Swansea, was jailed for life this year for torturing to death Joanne Tregembo, a former girlfriend. He said from his cell: "I was totally messed up by the Army and I want people to know about it."

The family of Miss Tregembo said his claim for compensation was a "cruel irony" because it came only four months after he was sentenced at Cardiff Crown Court. Her parents said they were sickened by Furry's action, which is being funded by legal aid. Paul Tregembo said: "For an evil monster like Furry to look for sympathy because says he was bullied is beyond comprehension."

The trial was told that Furry lured Miss Tregembo to his house and in an attack lasting an hour, he beat her with a hammer and stabbed her in the head and body more than 30 times. Furry denied murder but was found guilty.

Furry joined the Army aged 17 and claims he suffered two months of abuse that ended when his kneecap was fractured after he was allegedly pushed over. Yesterday solicitors acting for Furry and seven others served High Court writs on the Ministry of Defence seeking compensation of £100,000 each.

Robert Peterson, solicitor for the men, said most of the allegations related to incidents at Whittington barracks near Lichfield, Staffordshire, when The Royal Welch Fusiliers and The Royal Regiment of Wales were based there.

On the way to a palace, the Queen visits the pride of a Thai village

Moment of royal honour for one man and his pig

FROM ALAN HAMILTON IN NORTHERN THAILAND

THE QUEEN and the Duke of Edinburgh yesterday paid a call on Mr Wang, inspected his onions and patted his pig. The pig grunted. It was the main reason for the visit.

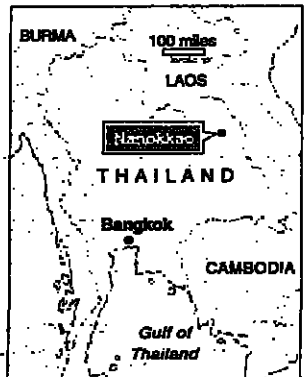
Mr Wang keeps a smallholding in the village of Nanokkha, in a remote corner of Northern Thailand near the border with Laos. He lives there with his common-law wife Madam Sod, his four children aged from 12-24, and his mother-in-law, in a traditional Thai wooden house raised on stilts against vermin and floods.

He supplements his pig, scrawny chickens and vegetable patch with a job as a gardener. In the space beneath the house, Mr Wang's elder daughter Yaowaluk weaves lengths of fine Thai silk on a hand-operated loom. She cannot travel to work because of a recent car accident. They have electricity, and water from a well, but no mains drainage. Mr Wang seems happy enough for his 42 years and, like the majority of Thais, is exquisitely polite.

When the Queen and the Duke arrived, the entire family squatted on rush mats and offered them a wai, the traditional Thai greeting of hands joined together before the face as if in supplication. It is traditional, when greeting great persons or monks, not to get up. The Queen bade Mr Wang rise and shook his hand. The rest of his family remained cross-legged, offering up three bolts of fine silk it had taken them a month to weave.

Mr Wang wore a blue shirt, baggy trousers and flip-flops. His wife and mother-in-law were in their everyday blue sarongs and their children were in the usual ragbag assortment of garments that children everywhere will wear by choice. No, said Mr Wang, the family had not gone out and bought new clothes for the occasion, although they had put extra effort into sweeping the earthen floor.

The Queen, who arrived in



a Toyota van, looked cool and relaxed in pink despite the oppressive temperature and some slight misfortune on the journey, when the chauffeur switched on the vehicle's heating instead of its air conditioning.

Touring rural projects on the last full day of their state visit to Thailand, the Queen and Prince Philip looked particularly at ease, as though glad to be out of the frenzy of Bangkok.

Mr Wang remained faintly puzzled, although greatly

honoured, that a woman of whom he knew little should suddenly descend on his humble home from the other side of the world, accompanied by the Crown Prince of Thailand and two royal princesses. "I have nothing to show them," he said.

But he did. He had a fine Chinese Meisan pig, nine months old and satisfyingly pregnant, given to him by a local rural development programme to supplement his income. Led by Mr Wang, the Queen and the Duke carefully picked their way through damp grass and scurrying poultry to inspect the beast. The Duke put his hand through the bars of its stockade and patted its quivering snout. The Queen kept a respectful 2ft distance. They asked Mr Wang about the pig and chickens. No, he did not keep the latter for eggs, he kept them to eat, or possibly to sell.

The Queen watched Mr Wang's daughter at work on her loom, waving her hands and asking animated questions through an interpreter. In the garden outside, a crowd of children squatted on the ground and held their hands in respectful wai for the duration of the royal social call.

Through an interpreter, Mr Wang told *The Times* that, a year ago, he had had a dream in which he went to England, where a war was in progress, and met a Thai soldier who sent him to see the Queen, who would give him a son. This bizarre train of thought appeared to have



The Queen emerges from the pigpen as her hosts offer a traditional greeting

no significance until, five months ago, a British Embassy official came knocking at his door and asked him if he would mind opening his home to a visitor, as he seemed to embody the rural Thai way of life.

Picking her way carefully off the muddy garden path, the Queen returned to her Toyota and sped off to a final dinner with King Bhumibol

and Queen Sirikit in their local northern palace, marking the end of a successful state visit. On their way to dinner, they stopped to admire a pair of elephants belonging to the King. The Duke could not resist getting out of the car to feed them bananas.

James Hodge, the British Ambassador who had barely two months to arrange the

visit after the untimely death of his predecessor, found himself with a knighthood for his troubles last night.

Back in Nanokkha, Mr Wang watched a tropical downpour water his onions and herbs and then remembered that the family had had no time to prepare dinner. Madam Sod set off in the rain in the direction of the market.

Family rallies round rape girl

By A STAFF REPORTER

THE mother of a schoolgirl raped by a gang in a 12-hour ordeal told yesterday how the attack had changed her daughter. "The whole family has got to come to terms with this because we have got a new daughter, our old daughter has gone," she said. "These men are animals. I can never ever forgive them. She is frightened to sleep and has been having nightmares."

The 15-year-old was snatched kicking and screaming from the Kings Heath High Street, Birmingham, on Friday by three men, as shoppers looked on, and then raped repeatedly.

"She's screaming and has the sweats and has become very panicky and clinging," said her mother, who lives in Birmingham. She said that her "bright and popular" girl wanted to become a midwife when she left school but now had been left with mental scars which she would bear for years.

"There is a gaping door in her mind and it will never be closed. She will have to come to terms with it."

"She is receiving counselling. She wants to get back to the way she was but she will never be like that again."

"She was an outgoing and popular person, and is now frightened for her life. I want to take the hurt away, but I can't take away her hurt."

She said her daughter wanted to remain anonymous: "She does not want people to know in case it gets out because she's frightened for her life."

The mother made an emotional appeal for the witnesses who ignored her daughter's plight to come forward. She said: "Somebody must have seen something, even the smallest thing may prove useful."

"How could the public have let this happen? It must have appeared suspicious."

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Payout for family who lost mother in 999 wait

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

A FAMILY who say their mother died after waiting 75 minutes for an ambulance have been given £25,000 in an out-of-court settlement. The payment is made up of £20,000 from a doctor and £5,000 on behalf of the London Ambulance Service.

A court hearing had been scheduled to begin next week. Lawyers for relatives of Harnesh Mahal, 55, a mother of three, allege that it took 75 minutes for an ambulance to arrive at her home in Southall, west London. She had suffered a heart attack and died after a second one which happened as she waited for the ambulance.

Her relatives are pressing for an inquiry into an alleged disagreement between a doctor in their home and the ambulance crew which arrived to take Mrs Mahal to hospital. "One of the things we want investigated is what took place between the crew of the ambulance and a locum GP as my mother lay dying on the floor," said her son, Manjit, 33, a trainee solicitor.

The family say that a control room tape, which would have recorded exactly how long the ambulance took to reach her, was erased. It should have been kept for six months but was wiped after one month even though the family had given notice of legal action, they allege.

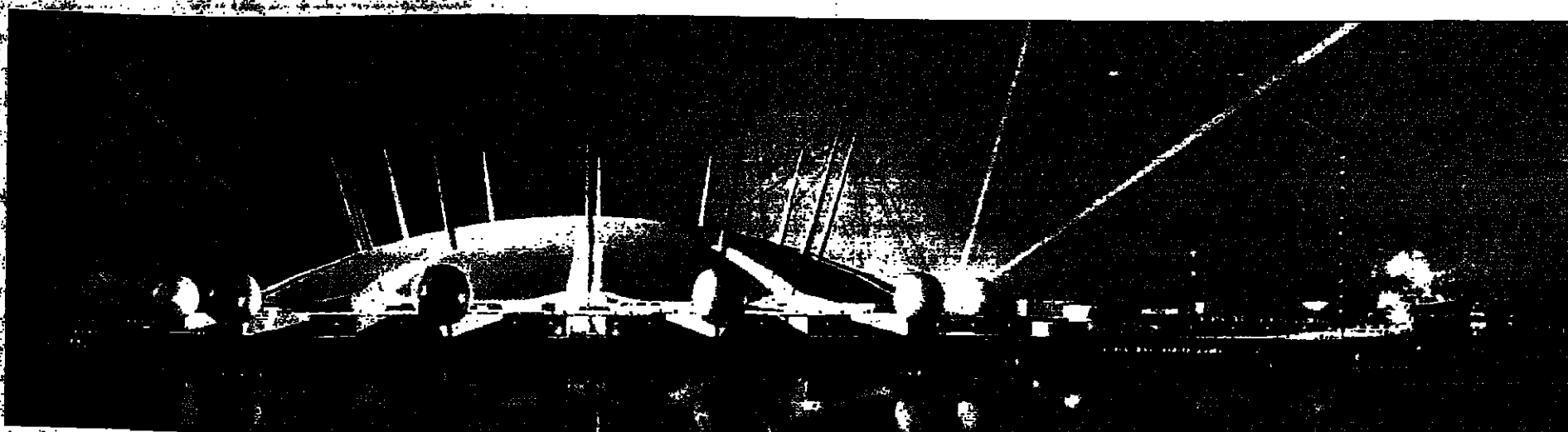
Mr Mahal said: "There was some doubt whether it would come to court because of the lack of information being provided by the LAS. They claim the ambulance took only 13 minutes although they have no evidence."

Mr Mahal believes his mother would have survived if the ambulance had arrived in time. "The second attack killed her because she suffered brain damage due to her heart stopping," he said.

"I made a series of calls to the London Ambulance Service but the delay was extraordinary and we think the London Ambulance Service should be held to account."

Mrs Mahal, who worked in an electronics factory, had been the main family earner since her husband died. She crushed his hand in a traffic accident six years ago.

Cross between marquee and dome will transform derelict land at Greenwich



The fabric dome will be suspended from a ring of 100-metre-high masts. Views from the mezzanine platform should range from the Thames Barrier to the City

Giant tent will cover millennium site

By MARCUS BINNEY

IT IS the biggest, best and brightest idea since Paxton raised the Crystal Palace. The centrepiece of the Millennium Exhibition in Greenwich is to be a "thundering great dome", large enough to enclose Trafalgar Square and all the surrounding buildings. Up to 50,000 people would be able to visit the exhibition under cover at any one time.

The huge dome is to be situated at the point of Greenwich peninsula, looking out across the water on three sides. Inside, it would be more than 1,000ft across at its widest point and high enough to enclose Nelson's Column.

The structure, designed by Michael Davies of the Richard Rogers Partnership, is to be suspended from a ring of 12 100-metre-high masts projecting through the fabric roof. "It's like a marquee with the roof hung from very fine cables attached to the top of

the masts," Mr Davies said. "The dome will also be tensioned round the edge, like Gulliver when he was tied down by the Lilliputians."

The decision to contain most of the exhibition under a single roof was prompted by the site's exposed position on the river. The project engineer, Ian Liddell, said: "The dome is designed to resist the strongest hurricane-force winds. It will have a strength equivalent to, or greater than, a solid masonry structure. In high winds, there will be some movement in the fabric roof, but it will not be noticeable from the ground." It could be heated in winter or cooled with huge fans in the roof during the summer.

A 35-metre-wide mezzanine platform would surround the dome, linking restaurants, bars and cafes looking over the river and into the exhibition hall. Views would take in

the Thames Barrier to the east and the City to the west.

Yesterday the plans for the dome and the entire 130-acre Millennium Park were submitted to Greenwich Borough Council for planning permission. As the dome would be a temporary structure, it is hoped that a lengthy public inquiry can be avoided.

Despite the rumours of recent months, finance for the exhibition is now in place. The Millennium Commission is giving a £200 million grant. The project would be undertaken by a public sector company which would have to raise at least £150 million in sponsorship, some of which is already committed.

The project would, however, be underwritten by the Government, through the National Lottery, although details have still to be worked out. With forecast revenues of £150 million for the year-long



Michael Davies has designed the dome to cope with the exposed position of the festival site

exhibition, the minimum total budget would be £500 million. If the exhibition were to open for a second year, it might even make a profit.

Mr Davies said: "The dome will be a very cost-effective way of covering a large space. Our target is a structure

costing no more than the average DIY centre. Anything cheaper would mean a series of marquees."

The centrepiece of the domed interior is to be a 15,000-seat open arena, available for a continuous series of concerts, shows and religious

services. Around the arena, but still under the dome, would be a series of 12 pavilions devoted to different aspects of time.

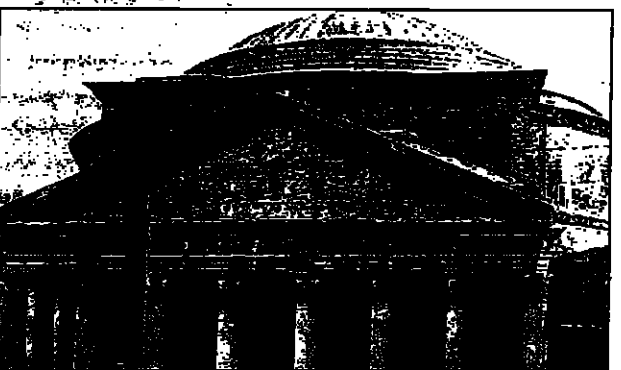
The dome is to be of white fabric, translucent but not transparent, and would glow at night. Though intended as a landmark, it would not dominate east London like the tower at Canary Wharf.

There would be two river entrances, but most visitors would be expected to arrive on the new Jubilee Underground extension. The station serving the site has been designed by Sir Norman Foster and would be only 14 minutes from central London. There should be parking for 500 coaches, but the organisers intend to limit access by car.

There have been widespread concerns about contamination from the gasworks site on which the exhibition will be built. The site would be capped with concrete, sealing in any pollutants.

Building for the future owes much to designs of the past

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR



The Pantheon: first great dome, built in AD 123

THE vast construction designed to house the Millennium Exhibition draws on two ancient structural traditions: the dome and the tent. By combining these two traditions the dome's architects have been able to exploit both sentiment and sound building practice. The dome is the strongest shape available, while the tent enables a huge area to be covered at low cost and without great difficulties of construction.

Tents were first used by nomads in 8,000 BC. They were reinvented as a serious form of building by the German

architect Frei Otto, who designed the German pavilion at the Montreal Expo in 1967 and the elegant Olympic Stadium in Munich, which covered 18 acres and was supported by nine masts, each 260ft high, from which hung a network of cables.

The Millennium Dome will cover about 19.5 acres. It has been called the largest domed structure in the world, but this gives a slightly false impression. Treated as a tent, it will not be the biggest: a much bigger one covering 105 acres has been built in Jeddah to shelter pilgrims to holy Muslim sites. As a dome, it is stupendously large, but it is unfair to compare a stayed structure suspended from masts with a freestanding building such as the

Houston Astrodome, which covers more than nine acres.

The first great dome, the Pantheon in Rome, was built in AD 123. Spanning 142ft, barely a seventh of the Millennium Dome, it was built of concrete, and still stands. The Romans knew that a dome would bulge at the bottom if not restrained and built the supporting walls 23ft thick. Later architects, such as Filippo Brunelleschi in Florence and Sir Christopher Wren at St Paul's, ringed their domes with iron hoops or chains.

The Millennium Dome is to be roofed with light translucent fabric. It is unlikely to stand for as long as the Pantheon; the architects give the fabric a life of 15 years.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Guernsey legalises abortions

Guernsey yesterday became the last area in the British Isles to legalise abortion. The island's government decided by 34 votes to 20 to allow terminations up to the twelfth week of pregnancy, provided two doctors gave their consent. Since 1910, abortion on Guernsey had been punishable by life imprisonment, forcing 150 women a year to travel to neighbouring Sark, Herm and Alderney to obtain a legal abortion.

Hewitt in court

James Hewitt, 38, the former lover of the Princess of Wales, pleaded not guilty at Okehampton to a drink-driving charge and to driving a Range Rover without a test certificate on the A50 at Whiddon Down, Devon. The case was adjourned.

Demolition order

Four families will have their homes demolished to create a new entrance to a housing estate in Swansea. The city council took the decision after the owner of the present access road threatened residents with legal action if they continued to use it.

First novel at 9

A novel by a nine-year-old schoolboy, written when he was seven, is published today by Poplax Press. Oliver Hughes, of Ramsbury School, Wiltshire, wrote *Imagine*, an adventure involving man-eating yetis, for a class project about Nepal.

£250,000 raid

A widow aged 70 suffered shock and bruising when two masked intruders locked her in a bedroom cupboard before escaping with jewellery worth £250,000 from her flat in Poole, Dorset. She later kicked her way out and called the police.

Time flies home

A Wiltshire student who lost his wristwatch while dancing in a Jersey nightclub found it two months later when he asked a stranger the time in Basingstoke. The girl had also been to the nightclub on holiday and found the watch, engraved "Nick Coombes".

BY NIGEL HAWKES AND NICK BOOTH

Dr Wright said yesterday: "We reanalysed grains within the meteorite and the carbon-based material we found had to have been formed by microbial activity. There is no other explanation. This is a smoking

"Without that work, we would not have looked again," Dr Wright said. "I was as shocked as anybody else. We tend to be cautious as scientists, but I believe I can say life existed and may still exist on Mars."



BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

The songbook, *Jump Up If You're Wearing Red*, published by Church House, the

In *Who's The King of The Jungle?*, a congregation is invited to act and sound like monkeys. Another, *Here Come The Frogs, Hopping Round the Pond*, is intended to reinforce the idea that God can come to worshippers through experience of his

Ring the changes: a song to cheer up services

created world. Others feature dubious words, such as in the lines "The Lord said to Noah, There's going to be a floody, floody, floody." Traditionalists might be partly appeased by the inclusion of one Latin chorus, *Domine Deus*.

Launched yesterday at St John the Baptist church school in Hackney, east London, where children aged three to nine performed the songs complete with actions, the book is said to be the first compilation of its kind and was welcomed by teachers and clergy alike. Hamish

He said that although the book was compiled for children, he hoped that adults would also use it in worship when children were present: "I was a chorister for 30 years and come from a very poor background. The first time I saw an action song, it was a complete culture shock."

Sr Enid, of St Margaret's community of nuns, said: "It is an excellent book, and we need this material for our work in Sunday schools and churches."

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3NZ.**

BY MICHAEL HORNSBY, COUNTRYSIDE CORRESPONDENT

John Bryant, chief officer of the League Against Cruel Sports, said: "Labour's announcement is the penultimate nail in hunting's coffin. The move will affect at least a

Baroness Mallalieu, an Opposition legal affairs spokeswoman in the Lords who heads a Labour pro-hunting group, said: "I am astonished that Mr Morley should have made this announcement without any proper consultation with other sections of the party. I would also question the legality of any ban."



BY EMMA WILKINS

Now, despite his protestations that it was only a joke, Mr Bull, 27, a sign painter, has been banned from Westbere Lake near Canterbury, where the "pike" was supposedly caught.

A repentant Mr Bull, from Ramsgate, Kent, said the 4 ft model had been made by a colleague. "All we wanted to

Clive Sherliker, the lakes manager, said: "We all got excited when news of the catch started coming through. It does sound like it was a joke that has backfired, but we cannot tolerate this sort of behaviour. We shall be writing to Mr Bull telling him he is no longer welcome."

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Songs

High Street

Newsreader's memoir splits family

Brothers accuse Snow of humiliating their sick mother

By CAROL MIDDLETON

THE newsreader Jon Snow was accused by his brothers yesterday of a "pitiless humiliation" of their elderly mother by publicly blaming her for his difficulty in forming close relationships.

In a new book, *Sons and Mothers*, Snow portrays his 85-year-old mother Joan, a bishop's widow who now has Alzheimer's disease, as a cold and undemonstrative figure who rarely kissed or hugged him. She had also left him, he says, with a "pathological fear" of claustrophobic relationships with women.

When, five years ago, the time came for her to be moved into full-time care, Snow was "ruthless" in his refusal to make sacrifices for her.

Yesterday his elder brother Tom attacked the memoir in a letter to *The Guardian*. He said: "It is simply pitiless. Self-indulgence has gained the upper hand over decency. I cannot see how anything in his childhood can now justify the humiliation of our mother, whose memory of those times has been wiped out. She is therefore, quite literally, defenceless in the face of such



Jon Snow, recalled rare moments of intimacy

ghostly public retribution." He agreed with criticism by his brother on the "inherent cruelty" of boarding schools, but added: "Upper middle class life of the 1950s equips my brother with no excuse for failing to accept full moral responsibility for his own life in late middle age."

Tom Snow, who lives in south London, declined to enlarge on his letter yesterday. His youngest brother Nicholas, who is chief architect for Kirklees Council in Hudders-

field, Yorkshire, said he did not agree with Jon Snow's views of their mother.

The Snow brothers were raised in Sussex, where their father George was a public school headmaster, and in Yorkshire, where he was Bishop of Wharfedale from 1961-71. The oldest and youngest brothers remain close, but Jon Snow said in an interview last year: "I probably see my brothers only once or twice a year. We are a pretty distant family. It's a great pity but you can't artificially engineer these things."

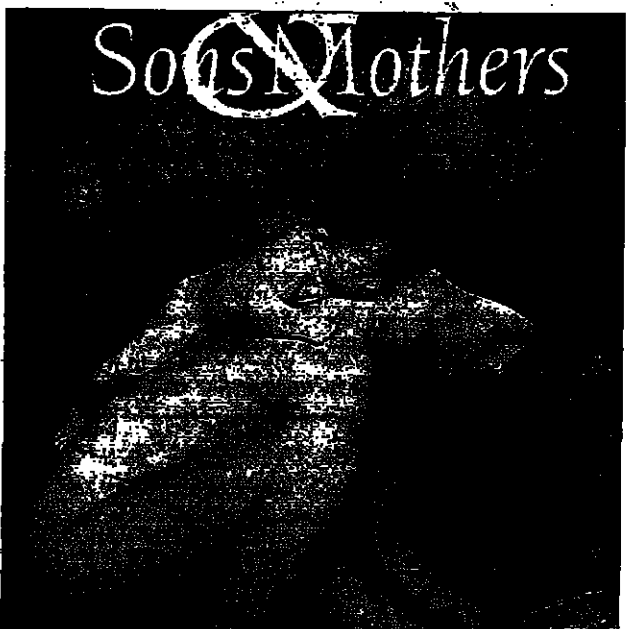
Yesterday the Channel 4 newsreader refused to comment on the public row but added: "Anything you want to use from the book is fine." His cousin, the *Newsnight* presenter Peter Snow, also declined to comment.

Jon Snow, 49, has two daughters with his partner Madeleine Colvin. Their earlier relationship was broken off in 1979 when he was briefly engaged to the Radio 4 presenter Anna Ford. In *Sons and Mothers*, an anthology with several contributors, he indicates that his mother was totally dedicated to his father, who died of a stroke in 1977, leaving little room for the children.

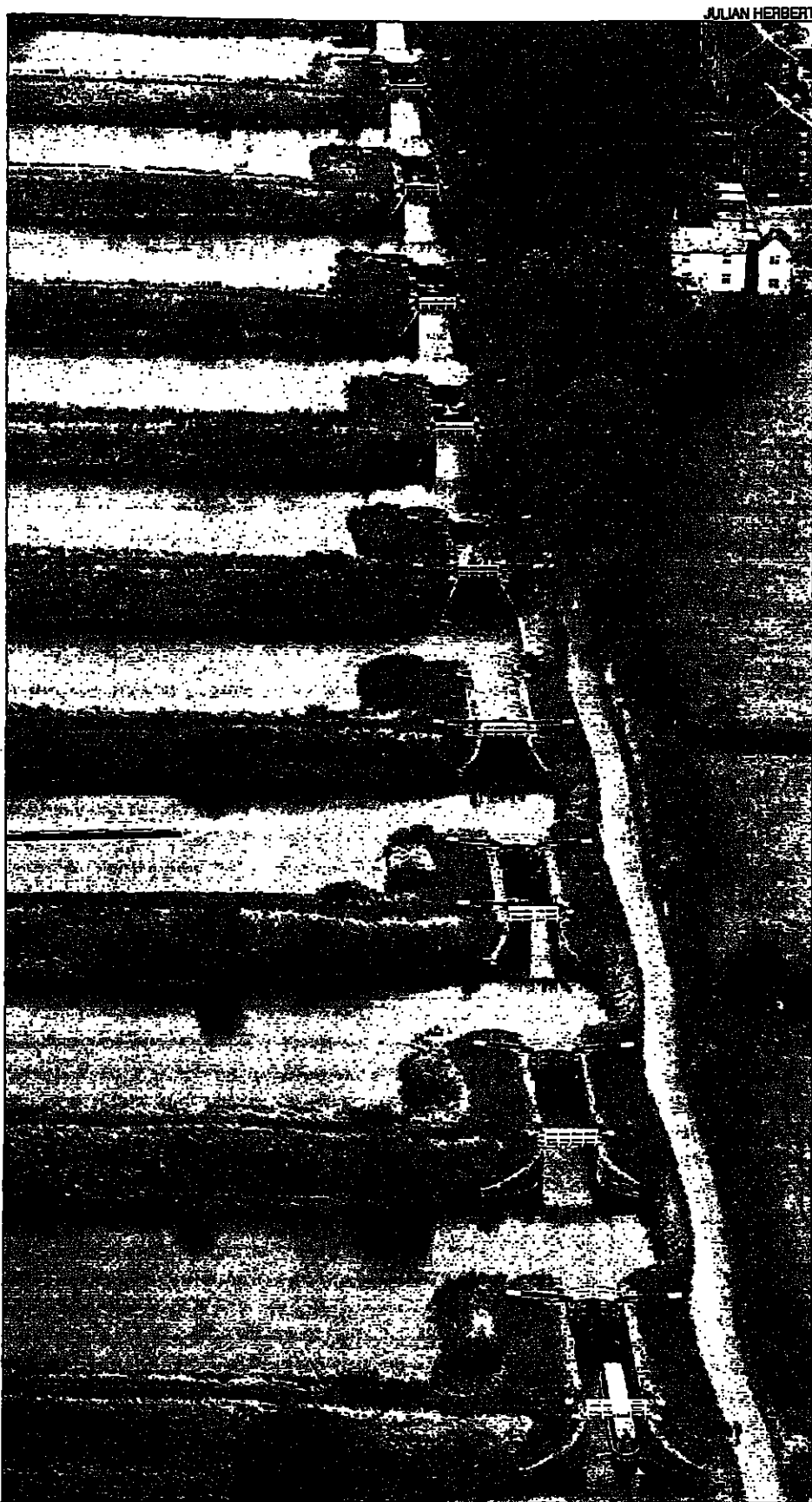
He maintains that he was closer to his mother than his brothers and that she was resentful of him having girlfriends. He likens her to Gertrude, the jealous mother in D.H. Lawrence's novel *Sons and Lovers*. His only intimate moments were on Fridays when, after having their hair washed, the brothers would lie on towels in front of the gas fire in their mother's bedroom.

"Beyond those treasured moments in front of the fire, I have no memory of any other tactile life with her," he says. "I never sat on her lap, or ran my fingers through her hair, as my children do with mine."

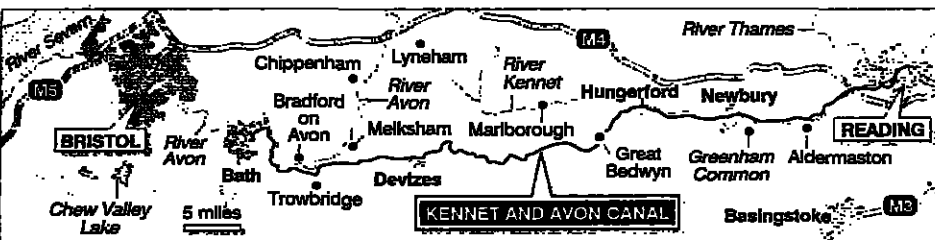
He concludes that this has left him with "an appreciation of the openness, touch, friendship and love that eluded so much of my relationship with her."



Book of memories anthology that started the row



The lock system at Devizes, part of the 87-mile Kennet and Avon Canal



Lottery cash saves waterway treasure

By NICK NUTTALL AND JOHN YOUNG

THE restoration of the Kennet and Avon Canal, one of Britain's most famous waterways, has been assured by a £25 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The fund announced yesterday that it was giving the canal, which links the Thames at Reading with the Avon at Bristol, its largest grant since it began distributing National Lottery proceeds in January last year.

The money marks the crowning achievement of a 30-year campaign by enthusiasts, local councils and British Waterways to save the 87-mile waterway, which fell into disuse in the 1930s.

The canal is considered a jewel of 18th and 19th century engineering. At Devizes are 29 locks, the longest flight in Britain, and along its route are splendid stone bridges and neo-classical aqueducts, including those at Avoncliff and Limpscombe. The canal also has five Sites of Special Scientific Interest along its banks.

David Fletcher, chief executive of British Waterways, which owns and manages the canal, described it yesterday as a treasure house of Britain's industrial history. "Providing a sustainable future for its special environment and magnificent monuments will benefit millions," he said.

Much of the money will be spent on improving access to the towpath and building ramps to help disabled visitors to enjoy the canal, its buildings and monuments and freshwater wildlife.

Michael Goodenough, the waterway manager, said the investment from the lottery would trigger a leisure boom along the canal, with private investors eager to develop marinas, waterside restaurants and pubs.

Another notable grant, of £6.5 million, has been allocated to the restoration of the Royal Gunpowder Mills at Waltham Abbey, Essex. For over three centuries, until their closure in 1991, the mills provided the explosives needed by the armed services and, not surprisingly, have never been open to the public.

Bottomley says sports clubs need tax breaks

By DOMINIC KENNEDY AND JOHN YOUNG

SPORTS clubs should be given tax-free charitable status because they are taking over from the Church in binding fragmented communities together, Virginia Bottomley said yesterday.

The National Heritage Secretary has called on the Charity Commission to recognise organisations, such as bowls and tennis clubs, for fostering of community spirit. They cannot claim charity status at the moment because they are considered to be run only in their members' interest.

Mrs Bottomley said: "Life is more fragmented. There are more short-term contracts, families are by their nature more short-term. It is more important to invest in things that bind society together."

"Traditionally the Church has done it. The places around which people congregate today are sport, a football match, a film, a pop concert. The use of arts, sports and heritage as a catalyst to bring the community together is very timely, together with a reinforcement of the role of voluntary organisations."

"We can get young people involved in sport, in football, netball, basketball, in orchestras. It's giving people a stake in the community."

Mrs Bottomley says her favourite National Lottery statistic is the £10 million that has been shared between 181 bowls clubs. She also pointed to £47 million for new swimming pools, £23 million for football, £21 million for athletics, £17 million for cricket and £15 million for tennis. Small volunteer-led community groups are to be given £350,000 to pool information on fundraising and administration.

Lord Rothschild, chairman of Heritage Lottery Fund, launched its annual report yesterday with a warning that proceeds were being diverted to replace government grants for heritage and the arts. He said: "If grants continue to be cut, the creeping process of lottery monies substituting for aid will inevitably follow. The result will be a spectacular U-turn on everything the Government said when the Lottery was launched."

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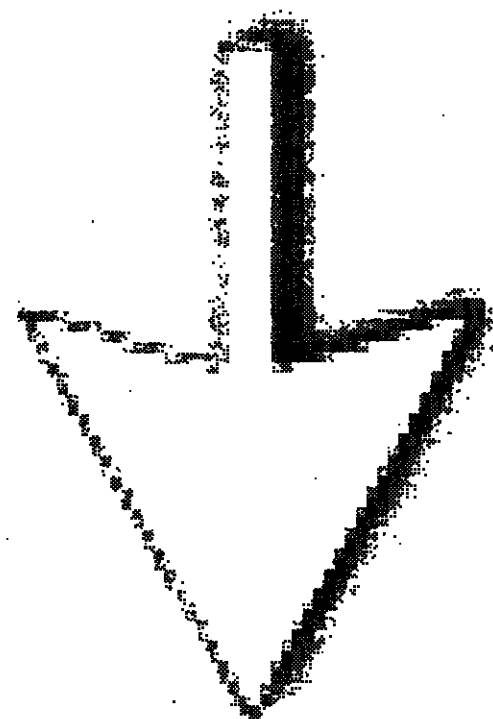
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'We will look back with love and thanks for an extraordinary man,' former Tory MP tells mourners

Harding's wife and girlfriend share front pew at funeral

By Emma Wilkins

THE wife and girlfriend of Matthew Harding, the late vice-chairman of Chelsea Football Club, met for the first time at his funeral yesterday.

Ruth Harding, 42, and Vicky Jaramillo, 25, shared the front pew but did not speak or exchange glances during the service at St Margaret's Church in Ditchling, East Sussex.

Mr Harding, who had pledged £1 million to the Labour Party shortly before his death, was killed in a helicopter crash in Cheshire last week. Among the mourners at the 13th-century church were John Prescott, deputy Labour leader, Ken Bates, the chairman of Chelsea, and Glenn Hoddle, the England coach.

Miss Jaramillo, the mother of Mr Harding's two-year-old daughter, Ella, was the only mourner to leave a wreath

both the Benfield Group and Chelsea. The note read: "Soulmate and love of my life. Forever and ever yours, Vicky." Mrs Harding, married to her husband for 20 years before he left her in the summer for Miss Jaramillo, was accompanied by their children, Hannah, 15, Luke, 14, and twins Patrick and Joel, 11. Hannah and Joel read the lessons.

After the service, a spokesman for the Benfield Group, Mr Harding's insurance company, said that his £200 million fortune had been left in a discretionary trust. "Matthew requested that his wife and her children, and girlfriend and her children, are properly provided for and will continue to live at their respective homes. He has expressed his clear wishes to the trustees that they support, for as long as it is deemed appropriate,

both the Benfield Group and Chelsea. The statement was intended to end speculation about the contents of the will, which will not be published for some time.

The address to the service was from Francis Maude, a former Conservative MP who had been a friend of Mr Harding since their days at Abingdon School, Oxfordshire. "Matthew was driven, competitive, creative, touched with a bit of genius," he said. His passion for Chelsea was intense. "Never look back," he used to say. But we will look back, with love and thanks for an extraordinary man.

Labour launched its most costly advertising campaign yesterday, which will be funded by the £1 million Harding donation. The nationwide poster blitz will have the slogan "Enough is Enough".



Ruth Harding: two of her children read the lessons



Vicky Jaramillo: left her wreath outside the church

Pilot 'not licensed for bad weather'

THE pilot of the helicopter in which Matthew Harding died was not licensed to fly in bad weather conditions. It was disclosed yesterday. Reports differ as to the seriousness of weather conditions at the time of the crash and friends of the pilot, Michael Goss, 38, insist he would not have taken off if they had been bad.

Mr Goss, who also died in the crash, was not instrument-rated, meaning he was not licensed to use navigational instruments to fly through bad weather. Investigators are said to be concentrating on whether pilot error was to blame and whether Mr Goss should have taken off.

The balloonist Per Lindstrand said at the time that a few hours before Mr Goss took off there was "zero visibility" in the region. "There was a lot of fog. It was definitely not a night to be flying a helicopter. I would not have flown to Bolton and back in those conditions," he said.

Birth can be the death of passion for most women



MEDICAL BRIEFING

IT was love at first sight when, seven years ago, Mrs Jacqueline Le Page met the man who was to be her husband. Mrs Le Page, who was then 22, was engaged to him within a week and before they married shortly afterwards they had decided to have children.

When in May 1990 Mrs Le Page was admitted to Kingston Hospital, Kingston upon Thames, for delivery she was expecting twins. Her Caesarean section was not a success and she needed a hysterectomy. A judge decided there had been "a catalogue of errors" and awarded her £40,000.

Mrs Le Page based her claim on two counts. She was disappointed that she would not be able to have more children and suffered severe jealousy when she saw pregnant women or newborn babies. Her claim was also based on the effect the birth had had on her marriage: she believed that her husband's adultery was the direct result of her loss of libido after the hysterectomy. Mrs Le Page felt depressed and found her husband physically repulsive.

Although Mrs Le Page had such a traumatic time during delivery, it may not be altogether fair to blame a loss of sexual desire upon that experience. Difficulties during childbirth may certainly contribute to loss of libido, but this also often occurs for many months after a perfectly straightforward labour.

For five years the Leicester Motherhood Project studied, among other subjects, the attitude of local women to sex after childbirth. Forty per cent said that their feelings about sexual intercourse had changed after giving birth. Among the older women, which in obstetric terms is over 35, 24 per cent had no sex in the year following delivery, nor had 7 per cent of the younger women. Thirty-eight per cent of the older women had not wanted sex even if they had agreed to it and 27 per cent of the under-35s felt the same way. Only 37 per cent of the over-35s and 33 per cent of the younger women were having sex more than once a week a year after childbirth.

The Leicester survey also found that in the year after childbirth 79 per cent of the over-35s and more than half of the younger women no longer enjoyed intercourse. 65 per cent and 36 per cent respectively did not even enjoy kissing or close bodily contact — 77 per cent of the over-35s and just over 50 per cent of the younger women were rarely or never aroused and more than a third and more than a half respectively felt inhibited about sex in general.

Fortunately time and, with it, a return to the old hormonal balance, restores libido.

DR THOMAS STUTTAFORD

Ovary removal can help cancer victims

By a Staff Reporter

WOMEN with breast cancer can survive longer if their ovaries are "switched off" or removed, according to doctors.

An overview of 12 clinical trials across the world showed that ovarian ablation — stopping the normal function of the ovaries with surgery or radiotherapy — could increase life expectancy by up to 15 years. The study, published in *The Lancet* yesterday, involved 2,102 women, aged under 50 who were generally pre-menopausal. In trials before 1980, they were split into groups and given ovarian ablation by surgery or irradiation, or a control treatment.

For every 100 women allocated to the ablation group, an extra six were still alive 15 years later compared with the controls. The analysis was carried out under the auspices of the Early Breast Cancer Trialists' Collaborative Group, an international co-operative of researchers.

The results confirmed the findings of a ten-year follow-up of the trials published by the group four years ago. The researchers, co-ordinated by the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, wrote: "In women aged under 50 with early breast cancer, ablation of functioning ovaries significantly improves

long-term survival, at least in the absence of chemotherapy. Previous studies have shown that oestrogen produced by the ovaries is linked to breast cancer and chances of the disease recurring.

But cancer experts are still unable to agree whether the benefits of hormone deprivation are outweighed by the disadvantages. Ovarian ablation may incur side-effects that include acute menopausal symptoms and the long-term effects of an early menopause.

In a commentary on the research also published in *The Lancet*, Dr Victor Barley of the Bristol Oncology Centre wrote: "Even if we can counsel patients about the relative safety of hormone deprivation, it is still not clear which group of patients will gain most from this operation."

Blood tests taken from the mother could provide a safer form of prenatal diagnosis for genetic defects, a team from the University of California has shown (Nigel Hawkes writes). Existing tests that involve taking samples from the womb pose a small risk to the unborn baby. Another advantage is that the blood tests could be taken earlier in the pregnancy, when an abortion is less traumatic to the mother.



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Phon may trials

THE court has ruled that the trial of a woman who was accused of murdering her husband should proceed.

A woman who was accused of murdering her husband was allowed to stand trial after a judge ruled that the trial should proceed.

The woman, who was accused of murdering her husband, was allowed to stand trial after a judge ruled that the trial should proceed.

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Oversup away at humbl

WEEKEND

THE price of a house in the London area has fallen by 10 per cent since the start of the year, according to a survey by the National Association of Estate Agents.

The survey, which was based on 100 properties, found that the average price of a house in the London area had fallen by 10 per cent since the start of the year.

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ON THIS



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Phone tap evidence may be allowed in trials of terrorists

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

THE Government is considering allowing information gathered by phone tapping to be admissible evidence in UK courts to combat terrorist and organised crime.

A senior law lord who has reviewed anti-terrorist laws yesterday joined Sir Hugh Annesley, the former RUC chief constable, in urging the Government to allow phone-tap evidence in courts.

Michael Howard is holding discussions over the possibility of introducing the measure. It could be brought in as a new clause to either of the Government's law and order measures, the Crime (Sentences) Bill or the Police Bill which the Home Secretary will publish today.

Lord Lloyd of Berwick made his call in a 176-page report which called for a toughening of laws to deal with all kinds of terrorism and also recommended a relaxation of key measures in the event of permanent peace in Northern

Ireland. His review of the existing legislation was set up last December before the IRA ceasefire ended in February.

Lord Lloyd said that material gained from telephone taps in cases of national security should be allowed as there was no special difficulty in presenting the evidence in court. "In terrorist cases, where the terrorist has, in a sense, declared war on our society and our democratic way of doing things, then society is surely entitled to defend itself. It should not be obliged to fight with one arm tied behind its back."

He recommended a new definition of terrorism, a new concept of terrorist offences, an extension of the power to ban terrorist organisations to cover foreign groups and a new offence of being concerned in the preparation of an act of terrorism.

Lord Lloyd offers a new definition of terrorism as: "The use of serious violence

against persons or property, or the threat to use such violence, to intimidate or coerce a government, the public or any sections of the public in order to promote political, social or ideological objectives."

There is little likelihood of the Government acting immediately on any of Lord Lloyd's recommendations, but Mr Howard promised to consider the report carefully.

Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord Chancellor, gave his backing to a shake-up of civil justice with a pledge to provide the necessary resources to implement the radical reforms of the Woolf report.

He said that the reforms, aimed at cutting costs and delays, would be brought in as soon as possible. He also made clear that his own proposals for overhauling legal aid would not be brought before the new framework for civil justice was in place in October 1998.

Student shines as poet laureate in the sun

By ROBIN YOUNG

EAT your heart out, Ted Hughes. A British job hunter has succeeded in winning himself employment as poet laureate to a group of sun-drenched islands in the south Pacific.

Daniel Wilson, a student aged 21 from St Anne's, Lancashire, wrote to the government of the Kiribatis proposing himself as their poet laureate. To his astonishment it promptly wrote back saying: "The job is yours."

Mr Wilson said yesterday: "I have always enjoyed toying with words and I was thinking about trying to combine that interest with the perfect place to work. I was looking through a geographic magazine in a dentist's waiting room when I saw this picture of a beautiful woman sitting on a white sand beach. I thought that was the place for me."

"I decided to send a letter addressed to the government of the islands, not knowing whether there even was such a thing. Basically I made up the post of poet laureate for the Kiribatis and told them how much they needed one. I included my CV and a poem about the place, even though



PETER LOMAS

Daniel Wilson expects to find a new hut ready and waiting for him on the beach

I knew next to nothing about it."

Mr Wilson admitted that he had never expected a response, let alone an acceptance from the 35 islands, which make up a British

Protectorate and were used as the location for *Mutiny on the Bounty*.

"I was stunned when a letter dropped through my front door. It came from Riki-ana Takeke, private sec-

retary to the President. It congratulated me on my poem and what they called its simple and touching verses. The letter said they would be delighted to appoint me their national poet

as they do not have many of their own on the island. It also said they could arrange to have a hut built for me when I arrive."

There are a few details yet to be decided. "Salary is to be negotiated," Mr Wilson said. "I am not sure if I am to be paid by the line, but I think my hut will be built near the beach. They said that it would be the best place for inspiration."

"Nothing will keep me from going there. I am already saving for the fare and I will be there this summer." He has already planned the journey, which will cost £850 one way or £1,000 return.

This is the poem which impressed the islanders:

*I'd like to live in Kiribati,
I feel it is the country for me.
Writing poems for all the people*

*Underneath a coconut tree,
The fishermen, the teachers,
The harvesters of taro
All living on the coral isles
So beautiful, so narrow.
I'd make them smile with words of verse
About all the things they see
And which makes them feel
So fortunate to live in Kiribati
A root vegetable

Oversupply chips away at price of humble potato

WEEKEND SHOPPING

THE price of potatoes is falling due to oversupply. Some farmers are selling their crops for as little as £15 a tonne, compared with an average of £120 a tonne last year.

The current average retail price is 25.3p a kg but prices are likely to fall back still further to levels last seen three years ago.

Promotions include:

Asda: fresh beef topside/silverside with basting fat £4.47 kg, pork escalopes £4.38 kg, savori cabbage 29p each, plum tomatoes 99p for 500g, satsumas 89p kg.

Co-op: Mr Lazenby's butcher's choice sausages £1.79 for 567g, whole chicken £3.79 for 1.06kg, frozen sliced carrots 44p for 907g, frozen double chocolate gâteau 99p for 5/6 portions.

Dewhurst: rump steak £2.99 lb, sirloin £3.99 lb. Harrods: fresh white truffles £190 for 100g, lamb en croûte £1.49 for 100g, turkey boudin blanc with chestnuts £1.99 for 100g, chicken Kiev £3.55 each.

Iceland: turkey mince £2.49 kg, lamb grills £1.79 for 510g, Birds Eye fish fingers £4.29 for 36, cut cabbage 59p for 907g, baby carrots 69p for 907g, blackcurrant cheese-cake £1.49 for 470g.

Mace & Spencer: traditional minced beef £1.99 for 510g, sirloin steak £12.99 kg, standard tomatoes 75p for eight, avocados 59p, Californian leaf salad £1.39 for

100g, extra large satsumas £1.99 a net, egg custard tarts 99p for four. Morrisons: British pork chops £1.39 lb, fillet steak £4.98 lb, brisket of beef £1.55 lb, cod fillet £1.99 lb, whole mackerel 79p lb, fresh mussels 39p lb.

Safeway: pork sausages £1.19 for 2 x 454g, frying steak £6.49 kg, chicken Kiev £1.69 for 284g, half gammon smoked £2.94 kg, closed cup mushrooms 99p lb, baking potatoes 89p for 2.5 kg, pumpkins 19p lb, kiwi fruit 12p each.

Selfridges: superior quality pork sausages £1.49 for 454g, fresh horseradish £3.49 lb, silverskin onions £2.65 for 500g.

Somerfield: skinless chicken breast fillets £4.45 for four (520g), pre-sliced Scottish smoked salmon £2.87 for 200g, Maris Piper potatoes 79p for 2.5kg, Brussels sprouts 44p for 500g, English mature white cheddar £1.88 lb.

Tesco: rump steak £7.99 kg, lamb loin chops £7.29 kg, boneless pork chump steak £5.39 kg, sprats 69p lb, salmon steaks £2.45 lb, sliced runner beans 99p for 200g, cauliflower 49p each, Brussels sprouts 35p lb, white potatoes 99p for 5kg.

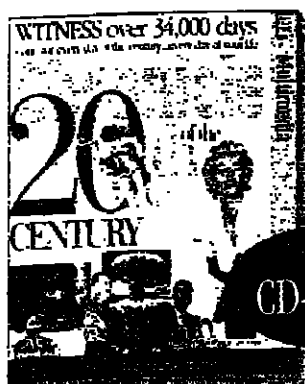
Waitrose: fresh partridge £3.29 for 250g, chicken drumsticks £1.99 for ten, free-range eggs 89p for six, green beans £1.19 for 300g, bunched asparagus £1.65 for 250g, baking potatoes £1.09 for 5kg, Angelina plums 69p lb, satsumas 49p lb, English Cox 45p lb.

ROBIN YOUNG

ON THIS DAY 1948



Government announce jam rationing to end
1st November 1948



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of the 20th
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EMU would cost Britain billions, ministers warned

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JOINING a single currency would cost the British taxpayer billions of pounds in help for European states that face huge pension debts, ministers were warned yesterday.

Other countries in the European Union have far bigger commitments than Britain, which has led the Continent in transferring the provision of state pensions to the private sector. According to a cross-party Commons report, membership of monetary union would mean Britain having to share the soaring costs of supporting pensioners throughout the EU.

Although the report was seized upon by Euro-sceptic MPs as evidence of the dangers of monetary union, Treasury ministers immediately denied its main argument by claiming that the Maastricht treaty protected Britain from being saddled with other countries' pension debts.

The Social Security Select

Committee accused European governments of failing to include state pension costs when considering national deficits, which must be kept within tight limits before countries can join a single currency.

The committee came under pressure from senior European Commission officials who, according to an appendix to the report, asked them to encourage debate but to "stop short of saying... there should be no EMU". Although the MPs avoid going that far, they demand that ministers persuade their European colleagues of the need for pension liabilities in deciding whether member states can join a single currency.

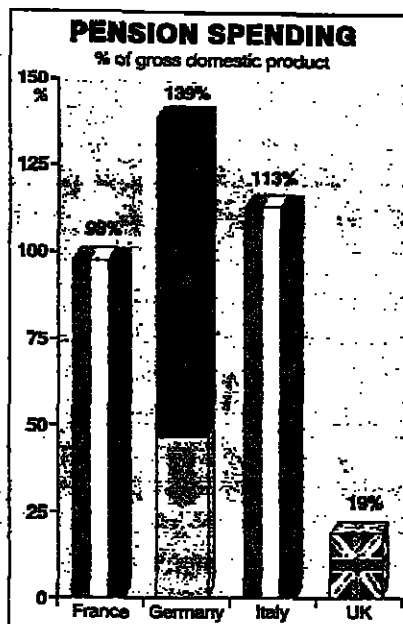
Frank Field, the committee's Labour chairman, accused the Commission of trying to dodge a crisis threatening many European member states. "They can't cut pensions because people will go out on the streets and riot. If

they issue bonds interest rates go up and if they print money it causes inflation."

The report claims that, if Britain's national debt included the £200 billion liability for state pensions, it would increase from its present £5,000 per person to £9,000 per person. If Britain had also to share other European pension debts, the figure could increase to £30,000 per person, or to a national deficit of £2,000 billion.

"As the UK's outstanding public pensions liabilities are substantially below those of other EU members, there would be a risk that if the UK joined a single currency, British taxpayers could be called upon to help finance the pay-as-you-go pension obligations of other members."

However, William Waldegrave, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, told the Commons that there was "no question" of Britain taking on other countries' pension costs. Other countries "will find themselves... either having to cut pension entitlements, as some of them are trying to do now and causing trouble in the streets, or they will have to put up taxes".



The pensions gap: Frank Field, left, sees a crisis ahead; William Waldegrave says Britain has nothing to worry about



The report says that Britain would have to "suffer the consequences of being tied to interest rates on the single currency that were forced up by the market pressures of financing certain countries' inherited pension commitments". The European Central Bank might come under pressure to relax monetary

policy by printing money or countries might "borrow their way out of financial pressures", possibly by raising the yield on bonds. This could backfire on Britain, leading to rises in mortgage rates and industrial costs and damaging employment prospects.

Germany has already taken the lead among EU countries in trying to reduce its spiralling pensions bill by increasing the pension age to 67, provoking demonstrations. Other countries are expected to follow suit in reducing the burden on the state bill by reducing pension payments or

encouraging younger workers to join private schemes.

The private pension industry in Britain is greater than the combined private provision throughout the rest of Europe. Independent research suggests that Britain's state pension schemes are valued at one fifth of gross domestic product, but those of France, Germany and Italy are at least the equivalent of their GDP.

The report says that attempts so far by countries such as France and Germany to reduce their public debt by cutting social security benefits had met with "fierce political

industrial counter-action". Although the MPs insisted that they were not peddling a Euro-sceptic line, pro-European ministers said that the report was flawed and designed to undermine the argument for a single currency.

Quentin Davies, Tory vice-chairman of the European Movement, said: "The Maastricht treaty's rules prevent one member state's taxpayers being allowed to bail out another member state's debts. British taxpayers cannot and will not be asked to fund the rescue of other countries' pensions systems."

MP favours Bill on under-age drinkers

By ANDREW PIERCE

PLANS to give the police powers to confiscate alcohol from under-age drinkers in the street, which were dropped from the Queen's Speech, are likely to be piloted through the Commons by a Tory MP.

But Dr Robert Spink, who won third place in the annual ballot for Private member's Bills yesterday, will face strong pressure to propose legislation favoured by the anti-abortion lobby. Dr Spink, the parliamentary aide to Ann Widdecombe, a Home Office minister, said he had yet to decide but was drawn towards the under-age drinking ban.

Nigel Waterson (C, Eastbourne), who came fourth in the ballot, is considering a Bill to enable the prosecution in Britain of paedophiles who commit offences abroad.

Jimmy Wray (Lab, Glasgow Provan) topped the poll and Barry Legg (C, Milton Keynes SW) was second. Neither has disclosed his intention. More than 300 backbenchers entered but only the first four will be guaranteed a second reading for their Bills.

How far should Tories venture on moral values?

"It's the economy, stupid," James Carville's famous slogan from the 1992 presidential campaign has echoed through both this year's contest and Tory debates now over election strategy. Is a strong economy enough to win re-election and how far should the Tories try to take the initiative in the family values debate? The latest MORI poll for The Times can be seen as a warning of the risks, but the experience of the Clinton administration shows the potential.

The poll shows that the public cares about moral issues. In the unpremeditated question asked every month about the most important issues facing Britain, law and order has come top for the first time. That is partly a reflection of the publicity given to Frances Lawrence's moral manifesto as well as the wrangling between the parties over gun control, knives, stalking and the paedophile register.

While concern over law and order is spread across all social groups, it is of above average importance to those aged over 55, those who are optimistic about the economy, and, crucially, among swing voters both those who have deserted the Tories since 1992 and new supporters of Labour since then. The poll also registers a record level of concern over education, again felt strongly by swing voters and the middle classes. By contrast, unemployment, top of the list of issues since June 1991, has fallen to third, cited by 37 per cent now, compared with 49 per cent in January.

Labour has so far made most of the running after a series of strong speeches on moral themes from Tony Blair, while the Tories have appeared confused. This is underlined by the poll question of the proposals made by Mrs Lawrence on combatting knives, lessons on good citizenship and raising the public standing of teachers and the police. Asked which party, if any, would be most likely to put the ideas into practice, the public backs Labour by two to one over the Tories, 45 to 20 per cent. This is very similar to the current split on voting

intentions, except only just over a half of Tories back their own party and more Liberal Democrats think that Labour will deliver than their own party (by a 37 to 23 per cent margin). Labour agrees a big lead over the Tories among those who have changed party allegiance since 1992.

This poll will be cited by the "it's the economy, stupid" group as evidence of the pitfalls of the moral agenda. What it suggests rather is the risks of mishandling the issue. Talk of family values can intensify when it gets intertwined with religion and vague moral statements which are either unachievable or raise fears of government interference in private lives. There is a philosophical problem for the Tories about what the State should do — the balance between "authoritarianism and libertarianism".

In America, Republicans have objected to President Clinton's approach, summed up in the title of his wife Hillary's recent book *It Takes a Village* — because it extends government's role in people's lives. The president has, for example, brought forward proposals for television to have a V chip allowing parents to block programmes, on school uniforms, teenage curfews (just ruled as unconstitutional in Washington DC itself), and on banning tobacco advertising aimed at children.

The Democrat view is that such specific, and relatively cheap, actions respond to parents' real worries. They are closely paralleled by Mr Blair's recent proposals to deal with disruptive teenagers and noisy neighbours. Many Tories believe that this territory is naturally theirs, but they have so far not struck the right balance between vague aspiration and concrete proposals. But then it is always easier to launch a moral crusade in opposition than in government.

PETER RIDDELL

Dixons chief attacks Prescott in bias row

A COMPANY chairman accused Labour yesterday of seeking to infringe his freedom of speech by complaining about a television interview in which he praised the Government (Alice Thomson writes).

On the BBC's *Six O'clock News* Sir Stanley Kalms, chairman of Dixons, applauded the Government's economic

performance and hailed the return of the "feel-good" factor. But John Prescott, the deputy Labour leader, accused him of being a Tory placeman and complained to the BBC.

In a letter to *The Times* today Sir Stanley says that in the interview, given on Wednesday, he made an independent assessment of the economy. "This is the first time Labour has gaged a private citizen. It's outrageous and very heavy-handed. Mr Prescott must not be allowed to muzzle the whole country."

Mr Prescott told the BBC that the interview was a "disgrace". He said that Sir Stanley had been knighted by the major, was a party fundraiser and had helped to create Tory propaganda.

Letters, page 21

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Zaire close to anarchy as Tutsis capture key town

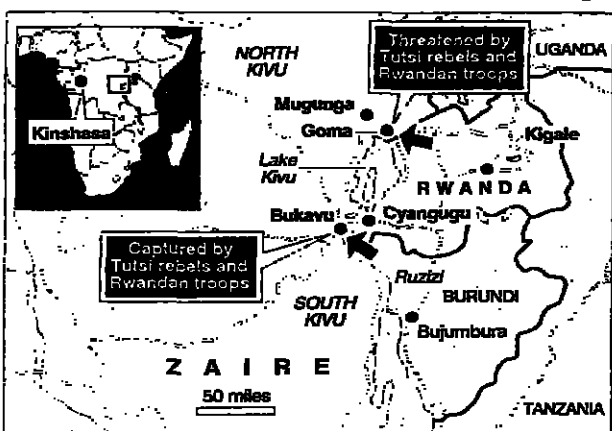
FROM SAM KILEY
IN CYANGUGU

EASTERN Zaire was plunged into deeper chaos yesterday amid fears that there could soon be uprisings throughout the country. Tutsi rebels and Rwandan troops yesterday captured one of Zaire's provincial capitals and were close to overwhelming a second.

According to United Nations officials in Geneva quoting unconfirmed reports, local staff of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees were ambushed in Bukavu. There were an unknown number of casualties, the officials said.

Early in the day, Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu province, fell to Zaire's Tutsis, supported by the Rwandan commandos who in a week of fighting have removed a vast part of Zaire from the control of the central Government. Later the rebels closed in on Goma, capital of North Kivu, capturing the airport and driving hundreds of thousands of Hutu refugees into Mugunga, now crammed with an estimated 500,000 people. Across the Ruzizi River from Bukavu, Belgian diplomats were trying to negotiate the evacuation of the rebels. Some reports said that the river was filled with dozens of bloated corpses.

One of the UN diplomats said the Banyamulenge (Zaire's Tutsis) were in control of most of Bukavu and "just mopping up pockets of resistance. They appear to be



behaving well and have given assurances of safety to other Zaireans and the foreigners."

This was in marked contrast to the situation in Goma, which echoed to mortar explosions and heavy machinegun fire as terrified Hutu refugees and locals fled the rebel advance. Aid workers were confined to their homes because of the chaos and the threat of looting.

The UN was trying to arrange the evacuation of about 100 relief workers trapped in the town. But Zaire, which says it is in a state of war with Rwanda, insisted that the border was closed to all traffic.

Michelle Quintaglie, a spokeswoman for the UN World Food Programme, said from Goma yesterday that "thousands of refugees are streaming into the city and

heading west [to Mugunga]", adding: "We have no way of helping them because we cannot get out of our houses."

In Cyangugu, separated from Bukavu by 20 yards of the Ruzizi River, it was not clear what the aims of the Tutsi rebels are. Their leadership is largely unknown, but has said that it will take Bukavu "before negotiating".

Vice-President Paul Kagame of Rwanda hinted this week that they might secede from the rest of Zaire. Secessionist movements are traditionally condemned by African leaders, who fear tribal uprisings in their own territory, but Mr Kagame signalled his tacit approval when he said that such a decision would be "entirely their own". But the rebels have said that, among their demands, is the resignation of Zaire's Presi-

dent Mobutu. Zaire's Tutsis are now expected to push on north from Bukavu around Lake Kivu's western shore, to link with rebels fighting in Goma. If little is known about the aims of the Tutsis, still less is known about who is fighting Zaire's army and Hutus in Goma. Many may be ethnic Tutsis from the area, but indications are that they have been joined by several other rebel groups.

If the two rebel armies are able to join and take Goma, they are likely to be joined by opposition groups throughout Zaire, who have campaigned peacefully against President Mobutu for the past four years, not daring to take up arms against his rule until he was struck down by prostrate cancer earlier this year. Wide-spread chaos has been predicted if he dies, but it is now obvious that his Government is already unable to hold the country together.

Talks plan: According to information received by the Foreign Office in London, leaders of Rwanda and Zaire may meet in Arusha, Tanzania, or Kampala, the Ugandan capital, within the next few days (Michael Binyon writes). The meeting would also include the leaders of Kenya, Ethiopia and possibly Tanzania and Uganda. But Kengo wa Dondo, Zaire's Prime Minister, rejected calls for urgent talks and a regional conference, and accused Uganda of involvement in the conflict.

Liberian warlord survives death plot

FROM REUTER
IN MONROVIA

LIBERIA'S chief warlord yesterday said he survived an assassination attempt when gunmen ambushed him inside Monrovia's presidential palace.

Charles Taylor's senior aide was killed in the commando-style attack yesterday by gunmen who forced their way in using Jeeps. Radio reports said ten people were killed.

Panic gripped the capital, still recovering from devastating ethnic warfare in April and May. African peacekeepers trying to end nearly seven years of civil war moved in quickly, deploying tanks across the commercial district.

Mr Taylor, who started Liberia's civil war in 1989 but is now a member of the interim ruling council, said: "As I entered the sixth floor I came under a hail of fire in which my senior aide-de-camp, Jackson Manley, and my Ecomog [military] aide-de-camp and several of my senior staff were wounded."

He did not say who was behind the attack. Last April his forces spearheaded attempts to arrest Roosevelt Johnson, an ethnic Kru warlord, sparking all-out warfare that derailed a regional accord to end the civil war.



Charles Taylor, Liberia's top warlord, who has said he will be running for the presidency in the country's elections, scheduled to take place in May

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kurds die in Turkish onslaught

Diyarbakir: Turkish troops killed 25 Kurdish rebels in the southeast yesterday, as authorities increased security measures around the country to prevent further suicide attacks. One Turkish soldier was reported killed. Two women suicide bombers have killed 10 people this week.

Fighting Iraqi Kurdish factions have agreed to extend a US-brokered ceasefire that ended two months of clashes in northern Iraq last week. (AP/Reuters)

Tamils killed

Colombo: Five suspected Tamil guerrillas and a soldier guarding them were killed during a breakout from a maximum security prison in northeastern Sri Lanka, military officials said. (AP)

Ferry tragedy

Delhi: At least 95 people were feared dead in northeast India after an overcrowded ferry carrying 135 passengers and rice and lentils sank in the Brahmaputra River. Forty people swam to safety. (AP)

The word's out

Madrid: Julio Ariza, a right-wing politician, accidentally made history in Barcelona by becoming the first in more than ten years to speak Spanish in the Catalan parliament. Nationalists walked out.

Cash woes for suicide scientist

FROM THOMAS DE WAAL
IN MOSCOW

THE director of one of Russia's two leading nuclear research centres was probably driven to suicide by financial worries, it was reported yesterday, in a case highlighting the desperate state of Russian science.

Vladimir Nechai was director of the nuclear centre in the closed city of Snezhinsk, formerly called Chelyabinsk-70, in the Urals. A city of 46,000 people, it is home to an important nuclear scientific establishment.

Mr Nechai, who was an academician, was in charge of designing nuclear weapons.

He shot himself in his study on Wednesday, police reported, and left a note saying he was under permanent stress because of financial problems. Workers in Snezhinsk have not been paid since June. Scientists in the city issued a statement on Mr Nechai's death calling on President Yeltsin to finance research centres because they are "on the verge of ruin".

Scientists in Russia's centrally funded nuclear cities, which were not located on any map, used to be called the "chocolate eaters" because of their privileged status. Now many are reduced to digging their potato patches after work to feed themselves and their families.

The crisis cuts across all branches of science, where the average salary of academicians is £200 a year.

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FROM LEXLA LINTON IN BRUSSELS


Privatisation payments are not usually allowed to reduce budget deficits. The Commission recently ruled that Belgium could not put BF20 billion (£400 million) from the sale of Belgacom, the state telecommunications group, towards reducing its deficit.



FROM BEN MACINTYRE
IN COGNAC

eutypiosis investigation unit. Three scientists have been working full-time on the project since, using the latest genetic engineering techniques in an attempt to clone a strain of Ugni Blanc capable of resisting the fungus. A breakthrough may be only months away. M Raguenaud said.

Ugni Blanc was originally imported from Italy and in the soil and climate of west central France its grapes produced a wine that was bitter



Raguenaud: confident

but which, when distilled and aged in oak barrels, became the world's most celebrated brandy.

For M Raguenaud, a master taster descended from

generations of Cognac makers who also farms his own vineyard of Ugni Blanc, the microscopic killer fungus is nothing less than a threat to a way of life that is close to a religion.

Back at Martell's elegant

château headquarters. M. Raguenaud insists that modern science will find a way to thwart "this horrible mushroom". As he sips an amber Cognac made from grapes picked in 1848 and bottled on the eve of the First World War, M. Raguenaud is confident that time is on his side.

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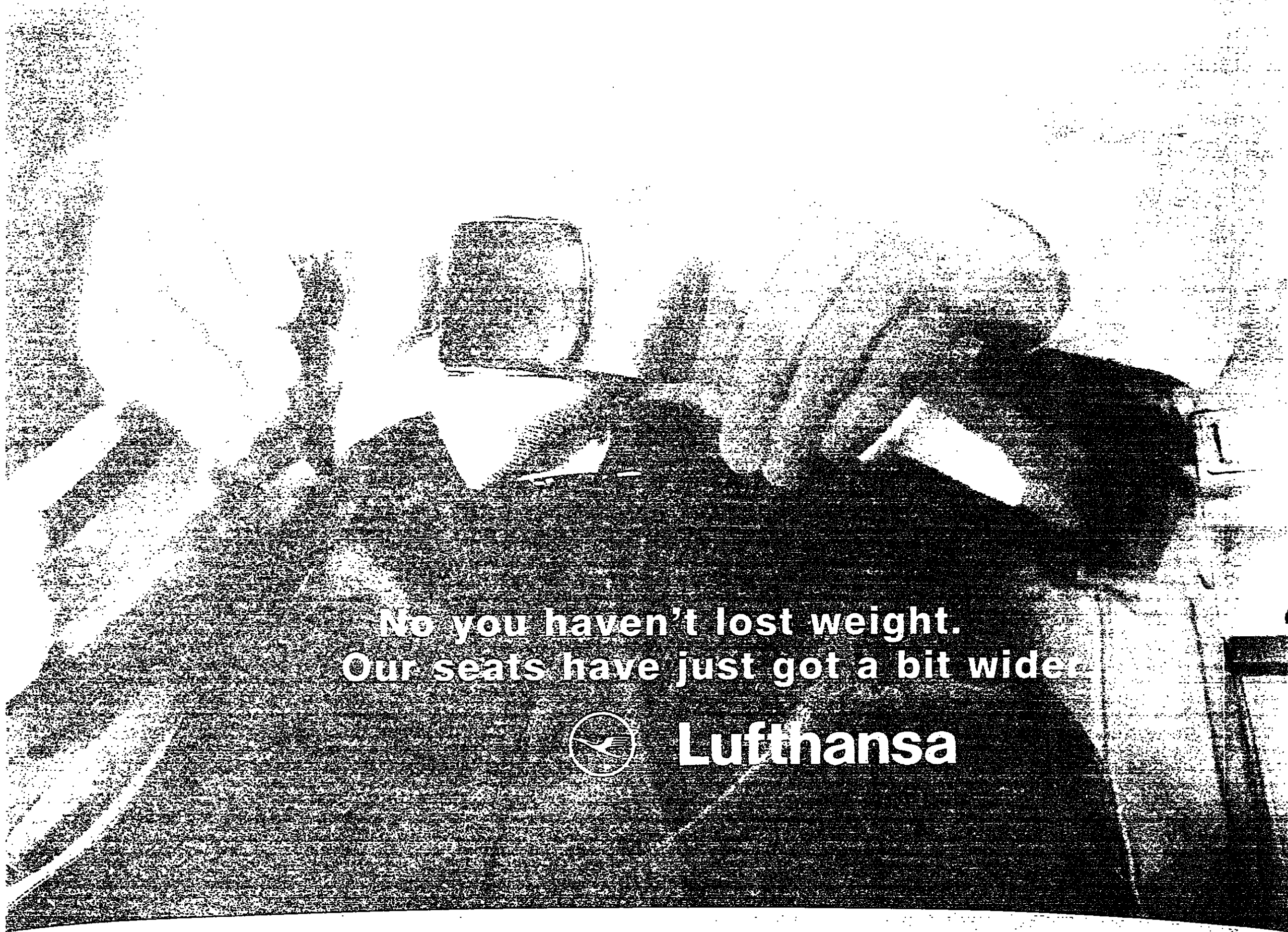
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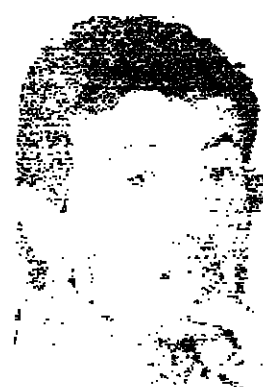
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Stallone's
baby has
love in heart

Stallone's baby has love in heart. The actor's first child, a son, was born on Friday night. The baby is named Saxon. Stallone's wife, Robin, is a model. The couple have been married for 10 years. Stallone is 42 years old. The baby is 7 pounds 10 ounces. Stallone is a fan of the New York Yankees. The baby's name is a nod to Stallone's favorite actor, James Dean.

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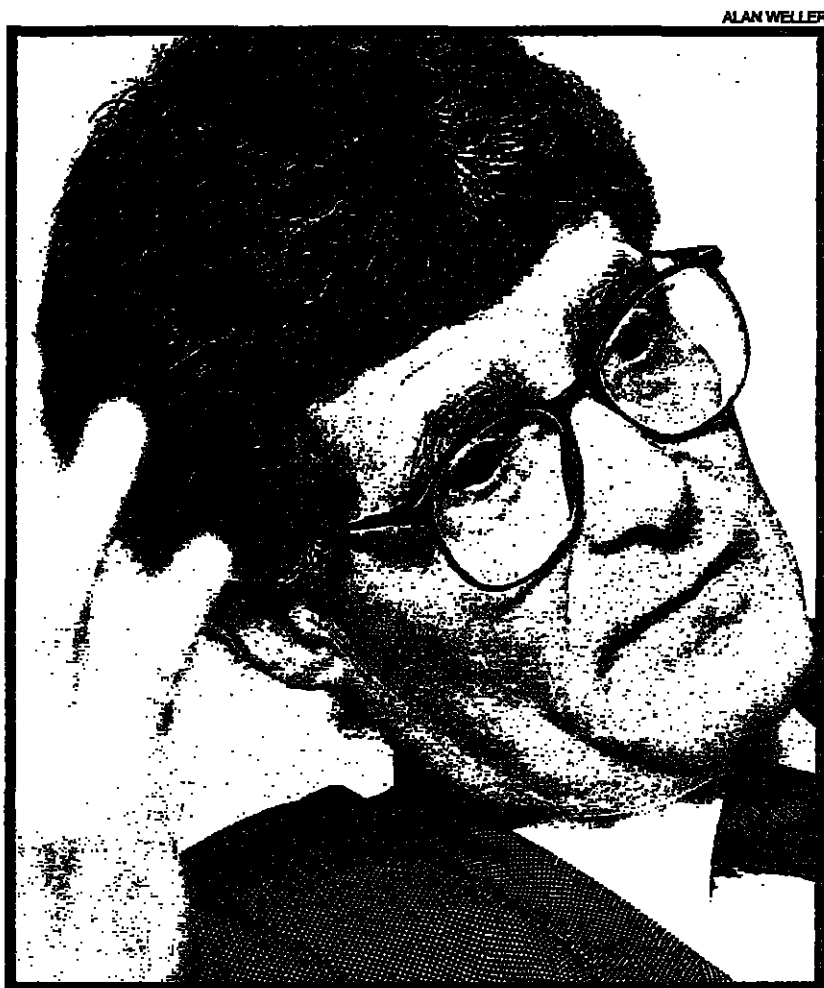
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Figure 1. The effect of the concentration of the *Agrobacterium* suspension on the transformation efficiency of *Agrobacterium* strains.

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BER 1996



Chris Woodhead gets irritated at being portrayed as a poodle of the Conservative Government. With three years to run on his contract he realises he could be removed by a future Labour administration but he would want to know why

'Literacy is everything'

As a disruptive pupil forces the closure of a school, and caning is back on the agenda, the Chief Inspector of Schools, Chris Woodhead, says an ordered start to school life makes all the difference

One disruptive ten-year-old closes down a school. Her Majesty's inspectors march into The Ridings School. "Morality" is foisted on the curriculum. Some say bring back the cane. Bring back Janet and John.

With blackboards and chalk everywhere, I call at Ofsted to see Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools. Chris Woodhead is more forthcoming and high-profile than his predecessors: tall, lean, and amazingly relaxed for one in such a hot seat.

He has just passed his 50th birthday, a milestone he spent rock-climbing on a Cornish cliff face called Suicide Wall. "I had to be hauled up on to a ledge by David Hopkins, Professor of Education at Nottingham. I was sweating, terrified, in desperate straits, and so relieved to get down. And there at the bottom was a group of bloody teachers from Dorset, highly amused."

Woodhead is not the favourite person of the teaching profession. To be "Ofsted" instils fear and - leading Teachers are annoyed by his inspectors' "insane" number of their work, and his outspoken reports. Yesterday on Radio 4, Professor Carol FitzGibbon called the inspectors (they include Gillian Shepherd's headmaster, husband) subjective, untrained, and inconsistent. "Leading figures in the educational establishment," Woodhead says, "seem deeply opposed to Ofsted's work, for reasons I cannot understand."

Perhaps it is the fact that Woodhead echoes most parents' sentiments. We all know - and revere - good teaching when we see it. Communicating enthusiasm is what it is all about, as Woodhead knows. He recently wrote to his old history master, Peter Teed, in gratitude and affection. "I thought I was one of your 15,000," replied Mr Teed. "The number of incompetent teachers who, Woodhead famously said, should be sacked."

"Our inspections make it perfectly plain that some teachers are more effective than others. We want to reward excellence, and weed out the ones who can't spell, can't teach, can't discipline children." But Woodhead says few heads give performance pay. "The culture of education is not enthusiastic about this."

He says he could see things going badly wrong in the mid-Seventies. Children were expected to "discover" reading by a kind of osmosis: spelling tests were frowned upon. Alarm bells rang for me in 1980 when I walked into our local primary school where a flashcard "television" (sic) was taped on the wall, and the headmaster's filing cabinet was labelled

"catalogues" (sic). The headmaster did not seem to think this mattered.

In those days, Woodhead was in the classroom himself, adhering to the prevailing orthodoxy of child-centred progressive teaching, but gradually realising that only a genius could deliver the same results as were possible under traditional methods.

When he left the classroom and became an adviser, the truth dawned. "Children have to be taught the conventions of language, how to punctuate and spell, in order to use them for creative ends. To believe children can explore experience without being taught language is ludicrous. Teaching is a matter of learning, not facilitating the innate potential of the young innocent."

All I can say in my own defence," Woodhead says, "is that I have since done everything I can to ensure that children in the future are equipped with knowledge. But unfortunately you can't turn round a system overnight."

Last year he went back to open a new science block at his old school, Wallington Grammar in Surrey, now grant-maintained and preserving the 11-plus. Here Woodhead, only child of an accountant, went through a bad patch in adolescence. He was caned twice: once for being caught cheating in a Latin test; once for turning the French teacher's pictures to the wall. "No, it didn't do me much harm, but it didn't do me much good either. Corporal punishment is a question for Mrs Shepherd. A more terrifying ordeal was the Highland reels the boys were made to dance. "My dancing report said 'Unbelievably deplorable'."

He rescued himself in the fifth form, fed up with teachers' negative prognoses about his O levels. "I buckled down and scraped all of them, even maths, grade six." He read English at Bristol followed by a PGCE (postgraduate certificate of education), taught English, honored PGCE at Oxford, then climbed the educational

administration ladder. His daughter (he is divorced) went to a comprehensive school and is about to start teaching in Botswana.

Woodhead, an admirer of George Walden's and Melanie Phillips's excellent critiques of what has gone wrong in education, favours whole-class teaching, grouping by ability, and the belief that class size is less important than the quality of teaching.

One of Ofsted's reports on a teacher-training college found that "few students had more than a superficial understanding of how to teach reading" and that "so uncertain was their grasp of the basic structure of English" that they could not correct pupils' writing.

But Ofsted concentrates on primary schools, as Woodhead has a Jesuitical belief in catching the infant mind. "If a child learns to read in primary school, whatever their home background, they are no longer disadvantaged. "If we don't get it right at Key Stage One, everything else is built on sand."

He does not believe that A levels in moral reasoning will make the slightest difference to life on an inner-city estate where children are running wild. "If there's any hope, it is by working on pre-school education, alongside health - from birth through to five to stop the cycle of deprivation, and unravel the effects of chaotic parenting."

"If they work in a disciplined and orderly classroom, and are fired with enthusiasm for learning, it is unlikely that in secondary school they will seek a different identity in a deviant subculture. Stephen Tumim, when he was HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, pointed out how many inmates are illiterate. It's a commonsense platitude, but literacy is everything."

Ofsted's report on three inner-London boroughs was perhaps atypical, but they found 40 per cent of the children in Islington, Tower Hamlets and Southwark were going to secondary school with a reading age of eight or less.

Woodhead refuses to make allowances for the intake of a school. "I don't accept that a school in a deprived community must have poor results. I can show you inner city schools where every child is Bangladeshi and arrives without a word of English. Yet all the children can read by seven. "Yes, the schools in question use the phonics system. Yet there is still a depressing resistance to phonics in the profession." And what of the new passion for excluding or

expelling the unteachable, a luxury long enjoyed by independent schools? To exclude a child, as Woodhead points out, was once regarded as an admission of failure. But one London sink school, turned around by an effective new headmaster featured on Radio 4's *Midweek* this week, made 150 exclusions last year, 35 of them permanent. What happens to these youths? "Many

of them simply fall through the net," Woodhead says. "Some go to pupil referral units, but there aren't enough of them and they aren't good enough. It is a pressing issue."

Meanwhile Matthew Wilson, the contentious 10-year-old who has closed his school, says (with an admirable command of grammar) "I just want to go back to school and get a good education. I am not

different from any other child."

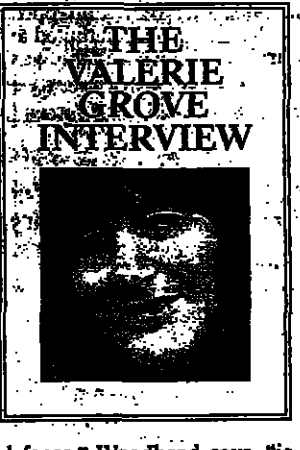
An Oxford don once wrote about a student who, in an essay on 17th Century pastoral poetry, spelt it "pastrol" throughout. He explained that it was not a lubricating oil, but the adjective from *pastor* (Latin: a shepherd). She looked at him wide-eyed and said: "Does it matter?" The "so what?" attitude to literacy

dates from her earliest schooldays. Why did the Tories not get their educational act together 17 years ago? Could it be because so few had children in state schools?

Woodhead, two years into his five-year contract at £82,000 a year, knows he could be removed by a Labour administration, but the Queen would have to be consulted, and he would like to know

why. "Mr Blunkett's views on education do not seem to be very different from my own; indeed, they seem to be rooted in the evidence that Ofsted presents. The principle of inspection is totally accepted."

Woodhead does not see teachers as demoralised victims: most of them remain exuberant, in a deeply satisfying job. "Let's keep the headline-grabbing stuff in perspective. Most schools are perfectly orderly places. There is not a Blackboard Jungle out there." There is, however, a teacherous cliff face.



THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW

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Food for thought

POETRY AND REMEMBRANCE

Starting in *The Times* on Monday the Rt Hon Kenneth Baker MP's selection of war poems from his new anthology *The Faber Book of War Poetry*



CORKS ON A CHOPPY SEA

The Government has to regain a sense of direction

If there is one pattern discernible from the past four years of this Administration, it is that each small sign of political recovery is rapidly followed by a setback. So it has been this month: a relatively united and successful Tory party conference has already been eclipsed by a fortnight of confusion. The result, as our MORI polls yesterday and today have shown, is a poll lead for Labour that is widening just as the Conservatives need it to narrow.

Ever since Frances Lawrence launched her manifesto, the Tories have been pushed onto areas where they struggle for advantage: they have gone "off-message", as the professionals like to put it. Labour, whose representatives run most of the country's tottering town halls and education authorities, may not be better in practice at answering the Lawrence call, but the public has heard Tony Blair's speeches about healing Britain's fractured society and is no longer as afraid of the Opposition as it was. The Government, struggling to disassociate itself from rioting schools and murderous housing estates, has been forced into a series of defensive and sometimes indefensible positions. Labour taunts of weakness and drift have a cruel ring of truth.

Our poll today shows that, by a margin of 2.5 to 1, voters think that Labour is the party most likely to put Mrs Lawrence's manifesto into effect. Barely more than half of Tory supporters (and they are themselves thin on the ground) believe that their own party is the best to oversee this moral renewal. For the first time in memory, law and order has become the most important concern for voters. How extraordinary that this issue, so dear to the heart of the Tory party, should have become an Opposition domain.

This is not the only issue on which the Conservative message is uncertain. On beef, the Government appears to be floundering; it was impossible to make head or tail of John Major's answers in the Commons yesterday. Only the economy is in the Tories' favour, and even that is not wholly positive,

with this week's interest rate rise presaging more to come.

Some Conservatives believe that a continuing economic recovery, linked to the fear that Labour would ruin it, is the single pillar around which the Tories can bolster their election chances. It is, indeed, their best prospect. But, with moral issues circling in the air, there are also extra dangers. When voters feel prosperous, they can concentrate on other "quality of life" issues, such as the environment or the social order. Every Labour victory has occurred when growth was high and unemployment falling.

Tory unity remains a pollsters' precondition of recovery. The truce over Europe has lasted now for a month or two but remains fragile. The stronger the position of the Chancellor the more likely he is to drive his opponents on Europe to dissent. Labour disunity would help the Conservatives to improve their ratings; but since the party conference, the rebels on that side have not obliged. Labour's will to win is probably still greater than that of the Tories, and there is no divisive issue that runs as deep through the Opposition as Europe does through the governing party.

The last hope for the Tories is that the polls are wrong. It is certainly true that national opinion polls are registering a Labour lead some ten points larger than that shown on the ground in local by-election results. Over the past two years they have consistently shown Labour at about 44 per cent and the Conservatives at 31 per cent. That gap is still large, but it is not as daunting as the "protest-vote"-inflated opinion polls.

The gap can be closed only if the Government rediscovers a sense of direction. At the moment, Mr Major and his ministers are like corks bobbing on a choppy sea. It is no wonder that Labour has taken advantage of government disarray, or that the public is inclined to reward the Opposition. The prospect of a Tory victory at the next election is thin and growing thinner.

CLINTON AND CAPITOL HILL

A Republican Congress would balance a re-elected President

Americans seem set to give Bill Clinton a second term in their elections this Tuesday. That much has been probable for some time. The matter of real tension concerns the control of Congress. It is possible that Clinton landslide might deliver Capitol Hill to the Democratic Party. Set against this, according to opinion surveys, is the longstanding reluctance of voters to vest complete power in the hands of any one party.

Given the widespread complaint that the US political system is prone to "gridlock", the political impasse caused by the failure of the electorate to award authority to one source — such caution might seem curious. This year, it is unusually well founded. Not only would the interests of the American people be served by divided political spoils, that outcome would bring a more constructive four years for Bill Clinton himself.

The astonishing recovery of the President since 1994 has been based on his rediscovery of the "New Democrat" credentials upon which he was elected in 1992 but which he appeared to abandon almost the instant he entered office. This year Mr Clinton has had a consistently populist message, favouring deficit reduction, a middle-class tax cut and a host of socially conservative programmes. While this switch has been shaped by an appreciation of the limitations on presidential power, it has also been influenced by an acute awareness of American public sentiment.

No President has read the polls better than this one. His electorate favours a constrained conservatism, supporting the general direction of policy that Republicans have brought to Washington over the last two years but without the hectic tempo and revolutionary rhetoric of Newt Gingrich and his vanguard. This the White House has

accepted and embraced with considerable skill, outflanking Robert Dole in the process.

The Democratic leadership in Congress has had no such conversion. Their campaign this year has focused exclusively on "Old Democrat" themes: namely taxing the rich, a militant defence of entitlements regardless of their cost, and strong support for America's labour union movement. Furthermore, if selected Speaker of the House of Representatives, Democratic leader Richard Gephardt would embark upon a four-year struggle with Vice President Albert Gore for their party nomination in the year 2000. This would be at least as disruptive to good government, probably more so, as was the struggle between Newt Gingrich and Bill Clinton in 1995.

If the President really wants more progress towards a balanced budget, tax reform, and innovation in social policy, he is more likely to get it through bargaining with Republicans — exploiting his veto weapon — than through negotiations with a congressional caucus nominally of his own creed that has little interest in this agenda.

Alternatively, it is possible that Mr Clinton's adoption of "New Democrat" clothing this year is as transitory as it proved at the last election. So far his intentions for a further term have been ambiguous. He could claim a more liberal mandate for his victory than those who gave it to him at the ballot box ever intended. Were this so, his relations with the Democratic Party would be more affectionate but the American public would feel more than a little misled. The best guarantee against such a development is, once again, the return of a Republican Congress that would oblige him to stick to the formula that has proved so popular on the campaign trail.

COPENHAGEN COWARDICE

A nasty black story of Salman Rushdie and the Danes

When Europe's foreign ministers gather round one of their many polished tables to chorus their disapproval of human rights abuses in Burma or Burundi, they seldom mention a notorious case closer at hand. For many EU governments, the long-lasting threat to the life of Salman Rushdie has become a bore and an embarrassment, an impediment to better relations with an Iranian state dangling lucrative contracts. Yet that same Iranian state refuses to reverse a sentence of death passed on Mr Rushdie.

Little by little, Mr Rushdie's life has improved over the past year. He has made public appearances in most continents, many of them advertised in advance. The author has developed a well-practised routine of consultation with local police forces which invariably precedes such visits. Security measures vary, but most police forces appreciate that the risk of attack must be balanced against the value of showing that a man unjustly condemned to death may live something approaching a normal life. Mr Rushdie has recently returned from a reading of his work in Vienna, advertised for three weeks in advance.

Among other places Mr Rushdie visited this year to publicise *The Moor's Last Sigh* was Denmark. A month ago, the EU's literary great and good awarded him and

the Austrian author Christoph Ransmayr its annual Aristeion Prize: the award ceremony is by tradition held each year in the city bearing the title of European City of Culture. Mr Rushdie began his preparations to go to Copenhagen and accept the prize.

Scandinavian governments have been among the most aggressive in their defence of Mr Rushdie's right to live and publish. Mr Rushdie's Norwegian translator nearly paid with his life when he was shot in 1993. But the Danish Government yesterday revealed that its tough words will remain merely words in Mr Rushdie's case. Via the Foreign Office, Mr Rushdie has been told that his safety in the Danish capital cannot be guaranteed and that they will try to make alternative arrangements in another city. Copenhagen has become the European City of Culture which does not think culture worth protecting.

If the Danish authorities have uncovered a fresh source of threat to the author's life which they do not wish to publicise, there are surely better ways of passing on the news than a brusque note forwarded by the Foreign Office. The only other conclusion is that Denmark's Government has lost its nerve and is making a fool of itself and of the EU. The prize ceremony is not until November 14. The harm can still be undone.

Future of fishing fleets of Europe

From Mr Anthony Quick

Sir, Mrs Emma Bonino (letter, October 28) has an impossible task as European Commissioner for Fisheries. She cannot admit that the main cause of the fishing crisis in Western Europe is the common fisheries policy itself.

The EU has been unable to adapt itself to the enormous changes in the international law of the sea since the Treaty of Rome. At the time of its signing fishing zones had hardly extended beyond the old three-mile limit. The new EEZs (exclusive economic zones) extend to 200 miles and include fishing rights, giving far more extensive rights to coastal states with large EEZs. By its parochial and obsolete stance the EU has not yet acknowledged this.

A multi-purpose body like the EU is unfitted to administer fishing policy. Only five EU states have a legitimate interest in Atlantic fishing policy: yet 15 have a vote. That Austria and Luxembourg, both landlocked states, should have an equal say with Britain, France and Spain is a patent absurdity.

Moreover, in the Brussels bazaar, fishing issues are decided on irrelevant considerations. For instance, the entry of Spanish ships into the Irish Box turned on the accession treaties for Austria, Finland and Sweden.

The EU's fishing policies have been particularly inept. Initially it encouraged a large expansion in the EU fishing fleet, and its current policy of trying to force fishermen to throw fish back into the sea is unworkable and wrong-headed.

No wonder that those European countries which have good fishing grounds and value their fishing industry — Iceland, Norway, Faeroes and Greenland — have stayed outside the common fisheries policy or withdrawn from it. As a result their fishing has been far better managed than that of the EU.

Except in the unlikely event of a reform of the EU, withdrawal from the CFP seems Britain's only sensible option.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY QUICK,
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Buckfastleigh, South Devon.
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Prescott complaint

From Sir Stanley Kalms,
Chairman of Dixons Group plc

Sir, On October 30 I agreed to a request from the BBC Six O'Clock News team to give an interview on the likely effects on the retail industry of the Chancellor's decision to raise interest rates. I was invited to do so as Chairman of Dixons Group plc, the leading electrical retailer and FTSE 100 company. As a businessman of many years' standing I contributed an independent assessment of the economic situation. My comments were subsequently used in the programme.

I am outraged to learn that John Prescott, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, has condemned the BBC for interviewing me on the grounds that my assessment of the economy was positive. According to Mr Prescott, I am a "Tory Party placeman". On the contrary, I speak as a businessman, I am not a politician.

The sinister implication of Mr Prescott's action is clear. For the Labour Party to seek to gag me, simply because I do not endorse their policies, is profoundly disturbing. To attempt to blacklist a private citizen smacks of totalitarianism. It suggests that any future Labour government would aim to censor the media in a quite unprecedented manner.

Do new Labour keep an "enemies list"? If so, which names are on it besides my own?

Yours faithfully,
STANLEY KALMS,
Chairman,
Dixons Group plc,
29 Farm Street, W1,
October 31.

No kids, no rage?

From Mrs Pamela Morgan

Sir, Last week I drove happily to and from work each day without the harassment and aggression that I usually encounter. Do you think that this absence of road rage could be linked to the half-term break?

Yours (registration number withheld),
PAMELA MORGAN,
9 Winterstone Gardens,
Mill Hill, NW7,
October 28.

Polonius updated

From Lieutenant-Colonel
Malcolm Cooper

Sir, Neither a borrower nor a lender be, except with a building society going public (report, October 29).

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
MALCOLM COOPER,
Mount Pleasant, Church Street,
Ropley, Alresford, Hampshire.
October 29.

Business letters, page 29

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Law and order legislation and a moral code for schools

From Mr David Farrer, QC

Sir, The populist auction in "law and order" legislation — now engaging Government and Opposition alike — promises a fitting culmination to the disastrous sequence of instant law-making of the last five years. Jack Straw is clearly determined to match Michael Howard in placating whatever whims possesses tomorrow's tabloid leaderwriter and it seems that no voter-friendly enactment will receive proper scrutiny, however daft, ill-drafted or plain illiberal it may be.

"Stalking" can of course be gravely damaging; but there is no evidence that it is any more an epidemic today than five years ago. If a new offence is to be created, it needs very careful drafting and scrutiny, lest injustice be done.

Frances Lawrence's tragedy and her moving testament have rightly moved the nation. Yet the indiscriminate use of knives, with similarly disastrous consequences, has occupied the courts daily throughout the Thatcher and Major eras. Workable legislation is not something to be passed on the nod for fear of alienating the voter.

Minimum sentences, especially for repeating violent and sexual offenders, raise fundamentally important practical and ethical questions which cannot be dodged simply by treating a life sentence as though it were just a flexible friend for the executive rather than, as in the offender's eyes, the ultimate punishment.

Many of those who prosecute or represent such people must readily bring to mind examples of men who would kill their victims if their detection meant a life sentence anyway. The subtleties of determining its length are liable to escape them.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID FARRER,
9 Bedford Row, WC1,
October 31.

From the Bishop of Chelmsford

Sir, It is a cause for considerable regret that any explicit references to marriage are omitted from an other-

wise admirable moral code for schools proposed in the report of the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community (reports, October 29 and 31).

It is important to commend marriage strongly to children if we are to counter the growth of one-parent families in the next generation. It is my experience that few single parents would choose to be without a partner to share in the responsibilities and privileges of parenthood.

The five dissenters from the report are to be commended for their distinctive contribution. It is to be hoped that the main thrust of their proposal that "the family is the basic unit of social life and entering into marriage and raising a family includes passing on spiritual, moral and cultural values" will yet find a place in any statement of shared values to be sent out to schools.

A positive and sensitive affirmation of marriage and the nuclear family is urgently needed for our next generation of parents.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN CHELMSFORD,
Bishopscourt,
Margaretting, Ingatestone, Essex.
October 31.

From the Headmaster of
Northamptonshire Grammar School

Sir, I am sure that the time is now right for George Bernard Shaw's quotation: "Morality consists in suspecting other people of not being legally married."

Yours faithfully,
SIMON H. LARTER,
Headmaster,
Northamptonshire Grammar School,
Pitsford Hall,
Pitsford, Northamptonshire.
October 29.

From Mrs S. A. R. Whitham

Sir, No doubting the gravity of the moral crusade. No doubting the diligence of those who have put together the "statement of shared values" featured in your paper today. But oh, the

still daily risking their lives and reputations in Bosnia and elsewhere worldwide on behalf of their country. He has "been there" too.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN WATERS,
The Army and Navy Club,
Pall Mall, SW1.

From Mr Philip Congdon

Sir, Sir Leslie Townsend argues (letter, October 23) that the post of Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) would be better filled through rotation between the Services than by appointment. I suggest that the premise should always be "the best man for the job" and not a political appointee.

Among the best commanders I served under were Royal Marines officers. Why should they be excluded from the CDS post? Moreover, as a former RAF officer, why does the Chief of the Air Staff always have to be a pilot? There are too many illogicalities in current military practice.

The CDS appointment requires strong leadership and unlimited wisdom. Let's get the "best" man into the job, elected by his peers. Who really cares about the colour of the uniform, whether he wears wings or not, if he's a hunting man, or anything else?

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP CONGDON
(Defence consultant),
4 Hindle Fold Lane, Great Harwood,
Blackburn, Lancashire.
October 23.

From Mr D. B. Jenkin

Sir, The arguments about the advantages of overhead and underground transmission lines for electricity ignore the most important point: we should reduce the need for either by generating electricity where it is needed.

Past government policies encouraged the generation of power near coasts, so that the South of England now gets much of its power from the North and Midlands. Battersea, Bankside, Fulham and other southern power stations were scrapped, when they could have been converted to generate power cleanly and near the users.

It is cheaper and more efficient to transport fuel than electricity. We should also build generators in places where the waste heat can be employed in factories, offices or homes, so that we use our fossil fuel reserves locally and minimise the carbon dioxide emissions that are believed to cause global warming.

Natural gas may be the most efficient and economic fuel for generating power in the short term, but cheap gas supplies are limited and recent techniques for gasifying coal and oil in medium-sized plants show that power can be generated cleanly even from dirty fuels.

Let us site our power stations in the most suitable places, maximise their efficiency and minimise the need for transmission lines. Then we can decide whether we can afford to bury the lines in sensitive areas or, with luck, scrap some of them.

Yours faithfully,
D. B. JENKIN,
(Gas and oil consultant),
30 Hare Hill Close,
Pyrford, nr Woking, Surrey.
October 31.

language of that statement. What an unspeakably dreary concoction.

I trust no one seriously expects children to learn such stuff by heart. If so, I fancy I can already hear them droning that which ought to be declaimed. Where's the poetry to stir the soul? Where's the force of expression to move the readers, to convince them that these things absolutely must be, and cannot be otherwise?

Yours, etc,
S. A. R. WHITHAM,
The Homestead,
South Park, 17 Park Grove,
Macclesfield, Cheshire.
October 29.

From Mr John Hartley

Sir, "A statement of shared values for children to learn by heart": really? Self: "a unique being of intrinsic worth".

Relationships: "relationships as fundamental to our development". Society: "collective endeavour for the common good". Environment: "a source of wonder and inspiration".

I am not sure if I know what some of these words mean — but then I am only 75.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN HARTLEY,
Lower Clatcombe House,
Sherborne, Dorset.
October 30.

From Mr Michael Graham-Jones

Sir, Concerning values and principles in education and society, readers may like to know that Christian Action, the association founded by Canon John Collins to promote the application of Christian principles in national affairs, plans shortly to celebrate its 50th anniversary by closing down.

Some of its few surviving members find this astonishing.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL GRAHAM-JONES,
The Limes, Standlake, Oxfordshire.
October 31.

Updated 'Fowler'

From Mrs Alyson Wilson

Sir, Philip Howard ("A jubilee for writers", October 28) comments that "Fowler annoyed the crusties by refusing to shoot some of their *bêtes noires*" whereas "Burchfield is going to annoy them more by producing quotations demonstrating that the best writers have ridden their *bêtes noires* through their dearest taboos".

Does this, I wonder, imply that Burchfield contradicts Fowler's entry under *bête noire*: "Those who wish to use the phrase in writing must not suppose... that the gender can be varied"?

Yours faithfully,
ALYSON WILSON,
22 Crescent Grove, SW4.
October 29.

From Mr David Watkins

Sir, To blithely excuse the splitting of infinitives is as distasteful to the careful user of English as using prepositions for ending sentences with.

Yours faithfully,
D. WATKINS,
40 Prospect Road,
Farnborough, Hampshire.
October 29.

Best kept secret?

From Sir Humphry Wakefield

Sir, While kindly using my beautiful white cows, avenue and bronze equestrian statue to illustrate your report (Travel News, October 17) on the launch of the "Secret Kingdom" campaign, your correspondent writes that we intend "to make north Northumberland as popular with tourists as the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales".

No sir! As loved but never, ever, so popular please.

Yours etc,
HUMPHRY WAKEFIELD,
Chillingham Castle,
Chillingham, Northumberland.
October 27.

Monkey business

From Professor A. Peter Fawcett

Sir, Is the Church of England's memorial service for a deceased monkey in Chester-le-Street, Co Durham (report, October 25), merely a belated act of contrition? In 1805, the ever-vigilant citizens of nearby West Hartlepool hanged a monkey on the grounds of being a suspected French spy.

Yours faithfully,
A. PETER FAWCETT,
78 Park Road, Chilwell, Nottingham.
October 29.

Horse sense

From Mr Gerald Vinestock

Sir, Only two thirds of the racehorses selected as losers by Australian scientists duly lost (report, October 31)? I can do better than that without the aid of science.

Yours faithfully,
GERALD VINESTOCK,
2 Overhead Cottages,
Capernwray, Carnforth, Lancashire.
October 31.

NEWS

School shut after attacks on teachers

The troubled Ridings School in Halifax was closed after a French mistress was sexually molested by pupils and two male teachers were assaulted. It was the second school to be shut this week because of unruly pupils.

The closure of the Ridings, where teachers have voted unanimously to strike unless 61 pupils are expelled, came 24 hours after inspectors had told the Education Secretary that the school was at risk of getting out of control. Pages 1, 19, 38

Police win Hillsborough appeal

Four police officers who suffered mental trauma after the Hillsborough stadium disaster in 1989 won their fight for compensation. In a landmark judgment, the Court of Appeal ruled that they had been exposed by the negligence of South Yorkshire Police to "excessively horrific events". Page 1

Moral lead for Labour

Labour has taken a clear lead over the Conservatives in the new battle for the moral high ground in politics, according to a MORI poll. Pages 1, 11, 21

Danes bar Rushdie

The Danish Government has told Salman Rushdie that he cannot attend an awards ceremony in Copenhagen. Pages 1, 21

Healey attacks Brown

Lord Healey, Labour's last Chancellor of the Exchequer, accused Gordon Brown of having "no government experience whatsoever" and criticised his caution on tax and spending. Page 2

Major's sore point

The teacher who caned John Major said that he could not understand the Prime Minister's opposition to corporal punishment because it had done him good. Page 3

Millennium dome

The centrepiece of the Millennium Festival in Greenwich is to be a "thundering great dome", large enough to enclose Trafalgar Square and all the surrounding buildings. Page 5

Family raps newsman

The newscaster Jon Snow was accused by his brothers of taking "pitiless" revenge on their mother by blaming her in a book for his difficulty in forming close relationships. Page 7

Church sings praises of dancing

Churchgoers are invited to "do the Holy Hokey" and dance in the aisles by a new Church of England songbook. The book is aimed mainly at children, but it is hoped that adults will also let their hair down and help to introduce youngsters to the brighter side of religion. Titles include *Prayer is Like a Telephone (for us to talk to Jesus)*. Page 5



Class war: the Ridings School in Halifax was closed yesterday after three further assaults on teachers. Report, page 1

BUSINESS

Brought to a halt: Fidelity Brokerage, the British stockbroker arm of the world's largest fund manager, was told to cease recruiting new clients until January by a City watchdog. Page 25

Power: The electricity industry will today face an overwhelming demand from retailers to end what they call arbitrary and unregulated charges on bills. Page 25

Lorrie: The conglomerate took a major step towards its break-up with the £327 million sale of its Metropole Hotel chain to Stakis. Page 25

Markets: The FT-SE 100 rose 15.2 points to close at 3979.1. Sterling's trade-weighted index remained unchanged at 90.2 after a fall from \$1.6325 to \$1.6285. Page 28

SPORT

Golf: The 1997 European Tour will contain a minimum of 36 events on three continents and the prize money will be similar to this year's £29.5 million. Page 48

Boxing: Don King, the American promoter, has given Lennox Lewis two dates early next year for his WBC heavyweight title fight with Oliver McCall. Page 48

Cricket: Alan Smith, the face and voice of English cricket administration during the past decade, left his office at Lord's for the last time. Page 41

Sports academy: The Department of National Heritage said that 25 bids had been received for a national sports academy. The winner is expected to be announced in January. Page 48

ARTS

Dramatic duo: Contrasting productions of Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days* open in London and Paris, while Ovid gets a jolky updating in a new version of *The Metamorphoses* in London. Page 35

High notes: Riccardo Chailly delivers a stunning performance of Mahler's 10th Symphony with the London Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican. Page 35

Pop books: Tales of excess: several new titles lift the lid on life in a rock band. Page 36

Pop albums: Spice Girls prove they have more going for them than female charm, and the Presidents of the United States of America return to form with a mixture of oddball humour and romping rock. Page 37

TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

COOL CITY
Your guide to bargain breaks in the world's chicest city, in Weekend

DIRECTORY
Your guide to seven days' TV and radio, plus food, books and entertainment

Strength of character: The upper classes have no fear, says Giles Coren, which is why they are good at seeing-off burglars. Page 18

Morality in mind: Valerie Grove interviews Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, about how children should be taught. Page 19

Gender gap: Too many boys are falling behind the girls at school, and it's just not good enough, says Estelle Morris, Labour's spokesperson on education. Page 38

Form-filling time: The best approach to completing a university application: find something to gain the tutor's interest. Page 38

High standards: There are lessons to be learnt from Japan's educational achievement. Page 39

Survival guide: How headteachers can fiddle league tables. Lesson one: enter everyone who can spell their name for general studies A level. Page 39

The European Union, with its traditional foreign policy divisions, is an awkward player in the Middle East peace process. From the economic standpoint it is a giant; and its contribution to the process is immense. Yet from the political point of view, the EU continues to be a dwarf. — *La Vanguardia*, Barcelona

TV LISTINGS

Preview: a new hospital drama, focused on a group of student nurses, begins tonight. *Staying Alive* (ITV, 9.30pm) Review: Matthew Bond welcomes Oliver Sacks's series about disorders of the mind. Page 47

Corks on a choppy sea

If there is one pattern discernible from the past four years of this Administration, it is that each small sign of political recovery is rapidly followed by a setback. Page 21

Clinton and Capitol Hill

Not only would the interests of the American people be served by divided political spots, that outcome would bring a more constructive four years for President Clinton himself. Page 21

Copenhagen cowardice

The Danish Government revealed that its tough words will remain merely words in Salman Rushdie's case. Page 21

TIM CONGDON

In terms of policy instruments, interest rates should be raised. The increase in base rates from 5.75 to 6 per cent was a move in the right direction — but too small to alter the macroeconomic environment in a fundamental way. Page 20

BERNARD LEVIN

It is just because Shakespeare is the very greatest writer who has ever lived (and we are certain that he will never be surpassed) that there is a subterranean flow — almost all of it not even understood by those who opened the sluices — who want to bring him down. Page 20

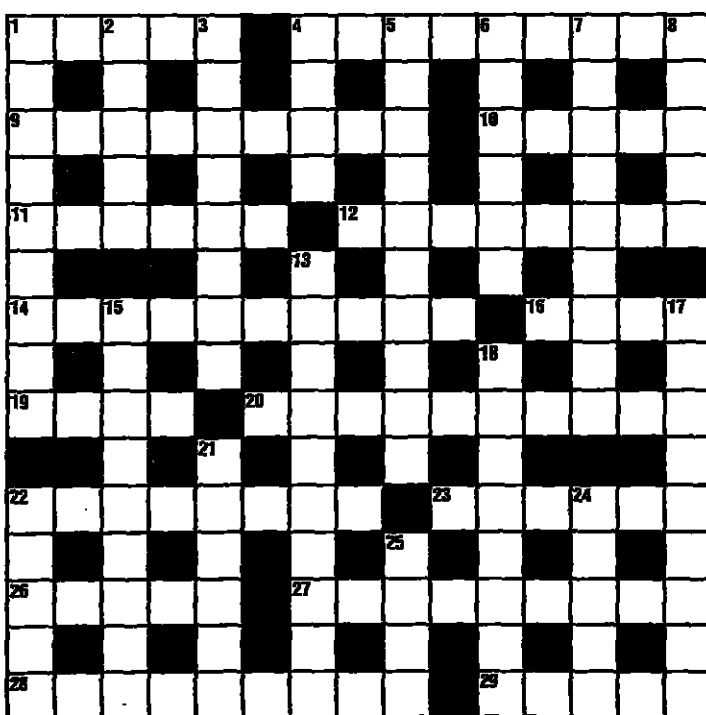
PETER RIDDELL

Talk of family values can misfire when it gets muddled with religion and vague moral statements which are either unachievable or raise fears of government interference in private lives. Page 11

Marcel Carné, French film director; Frida Knight, musician, writer and political campaigner; Kenneth Swiss, dentist. Page 23

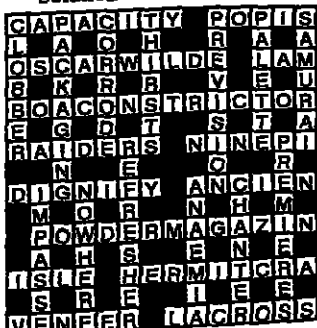
Common fisheries policy; moral code for schools; appointment of Forbes chief; new jails; Labour accused of "censorship" by Dimsdale; Fowles updated. Page 21

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,314



- ACROSS**
- From smell, I start to discover damp (5).
 - Stew — one that enlivens the stomach? (6-3).
 - Artist on television appeared to show simple way to make pictures (3,6).
 - Walter's old man (5).
 - Make notes in linden tree (6).
 - Financial centre is following mark shortage (8).
 - Labour-saving way to make a bed of roses (4,6).
 - Deer skins (4).
 - Japanese drama about a lifeboatman (4).
 - Expert historian? (4,6).
 - Pleased with special oil I found in flowers (8).
 - Almost lost sight of mischievous creature (6).
 - Be sparing with cream and peaches, initially (5).
- DOWN**
- Book short trip with an Islander (9).
 - Was sociable with both sexes (5).
 - Furiously fan seeds, revealing problem with ears (8).
 - Not many listened to a call for relief (4).
 - Board moved by some spirited writing (10).
 - Strive to welcome piano virtuoso (6).
 - Stay on pitch, ready to evacuate the middle (5).
 - Failures to agree about right hairstyle (10).
 - Main occupation (9).
 - Rigorous phrasing finally put into Australian books (9).
 - Man threatened with perpetual hanger (8).
 - Removin' seeds in apple (6).
 - Puff oxygen for enjoyment (5).
 - Abandon holiday (5).
 - Finished, but 'ave to 'ang around (4).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,313



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HOURS OF DARKNESS

Sun rises: 6:55 am Sun sets: 4:33 pm
Moon sets: 12:07 pm Moon rises: 9:29 pm
Last quarter November 5
London 4:33 pm to 6:06 am
Bristol 4:43 pm to 7:06 am
Edinburgh 4:26 pm to 7:22 am
Manchester 4:36 pm to 7:10 am
Perthshire 4:58 pm to 7:14 am

FORECAST

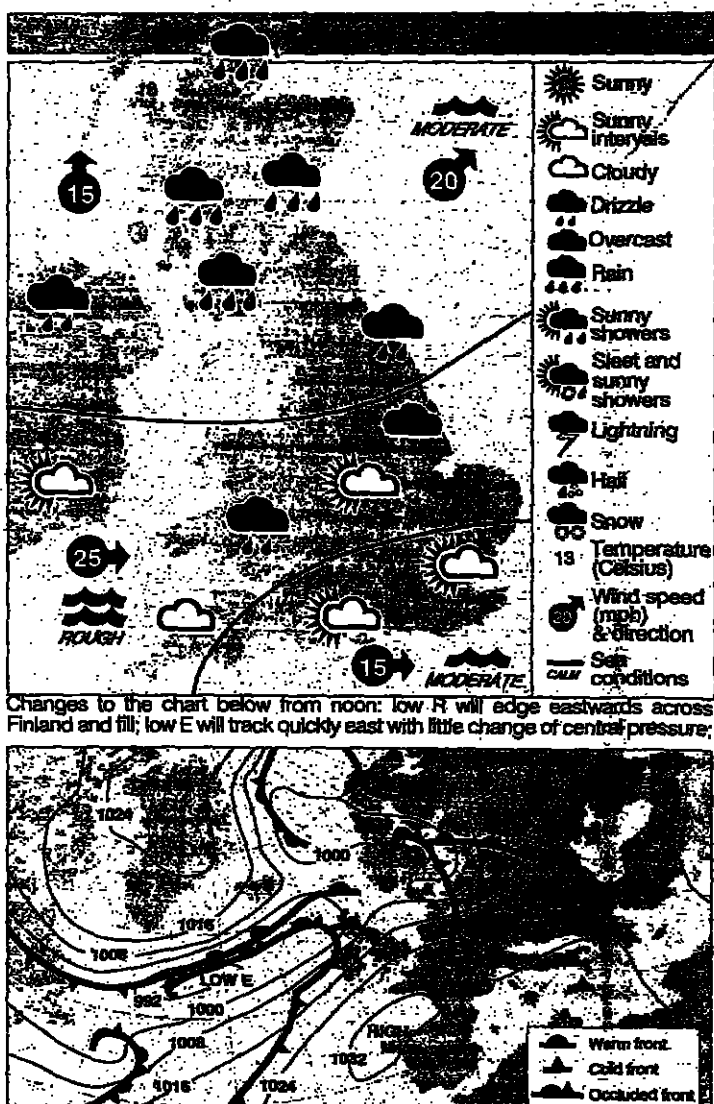
General: England and Wales will have a bright morning but coasts and hills in the west will be cloudy later with some rain or drizzle. Northern England will have rain at times. Rain will spread across Ireland and Scotland in the morning and may be heavy. A change to clearer, mainly dry conditions is expected later.
London, S.E. Cent S & N.E. and N.E. England, E. Anglia, E. & W. Midlands: bright, dry, winds moderate, westerly. Mild. Max 16C (61F).
Channel Isles: mainly dry, coastal drizzle. Wind light or moderate, southwesterly. Mild. Max 16C (61F).
S.W. & N.W. England, S & N Wales, Lake District, Isle of Man: bright, dry; drizzle on coasts and hills later. Winds moderate or fresh, southwesterly. Mild. Max 16C (61F).
Birmingham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, Newcastle, S.W. Scotland, Glasgow, Central Highlands, Moray Firth, N.E. Scotland, Argyll, N.W. Scotland: overcast; rain, heavy at times, then drier; winds strong to gale, southwesterly. Mild. Max 15C (59F).
Orkney, Shetland: bright with isolated showers, then cloud and rain spreading from south. Winds strong to gale, southwesterly. Max 9C (48F).
N. Ireland: rain; clearer for a time then rain again. Winds strong, southwesterly. Mild. Max 15C (59F).
Outlook: blustery showers in north, southern parts cloudy and drizzly. All areas bright on Sunday.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

City	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Temp	Wind	Cloud
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
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Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1

AHEAD

City	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Temp	Wind	Cloud
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1



City	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Temp	Wind	Cloud
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1
Aberdeen	10	0-54	16	81	1	1

Yesterday: Highest day temp: Torquay, Devon, 16C (61F); lowest day temp: Llandudno, 9C (48F); highest night temp: Llandudno, 2.9C; highest sunrise temp: Weymouth, Dorset, 2.4C.

Total number of lives saved so far this year: 847
Total number of lifeboat launches so far this year: 4,116
Cost to RNLI per day: £173,000
Cost to taxpayer: £10
To make a donation, telephone: 0800 543210

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INSIDE SECTION

2 TODAY

BUSINESS EDITOR

Retail

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, *INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT*

THE ELECTRICITY industry has a demand for more than 100,000 new jobs in the next five years, according to a report by the British Retail Consortium. The report says that the industry will need to replace 100,000 jobs lost to other sectors, as well as create 100,000 new jobs to meet the demand for electricity. The report also says that the industry will need to invest £10 billion in new infrastructure over the next five years.

Fidelity

hit by a new client on cli

FIDELITY

Brokers, UK retail stockbroker arm of the world's largest fund manager, was ordered to cease recruiting new clients until January by a City watchdog.

The highly successful company, which has the power to take disciplinary action if it is satisfied with the way in which Fidelity tackles its problems, said it would also ensure that customers who had suffered losses "are adequately compensated".

Some Fidelity Brokerage customers have already received compensation for losses of interest after terms such as dividend cheques were credited to the wrong accounts on time. Fidelity, part of the world's largest fund management group which looks after nearly £200 billion and is owned by the American family of Edward C. Johnson III, said last night that it would offer "compensation on an ex-gratia basis to any existing customer who has suffered loss as a direct consequence of its computer problems".

The SFA formally stepped in after receiving complaints from clients. The watchdog, headed by Nick Farnham, told Fidelity that it was "not closely monitoring" progress towards the full resolution of these problems by the end of January 1997.

"Should they not have been resolved, the SFA will take further steps as it considers necessary in the interests of investors." The watchdog, which has the power to take disciplinary action if it is satisfied with the way in which Fidelity tackles its problems, said it would also ensure that customers who had suffered losses "are adequately compensated".

Some Fidelity Brokerage customers have already received compensation for losses of interest after terms such as dividend cheques were credited to the wrong accounts on time. Fidelity, part of the world's largest fund management group which looks after nearly £200 billion and is owned by the American family of Edward C. Johnson III, said last night that it would offer "compensation on an ex-gratia basis to any existing customer who has suffered loss as a direct consequence of its computer problems".

Eggar and energy

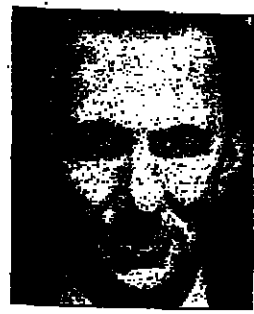
By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, *INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT*

TIM EGGAR, the former Energy Minister, will take on the duties of chairman of an engineering company that gets much of its work from the energy industry. He will spend more than half a working week at the helm of M W Kellogg, while continuing to meet parliamentary obligations. Mr Eggar joins the company, whose major clients include BP, Esso, Texaco and Shell, just over three months after quitting his position in the Government, narrowly missing the guidelines laid down by the Advisory Committee on business appointments. A spokesman for M W Kel-

051 711 01

THE TIMES

INSIDE SECTION
2
TODAY



ECONOMICS

What made the Chancellor raise the interest rate?
PAGE 29



EDUCATION

Japan may have some lessons for our universities
PAGES 38, 39



SPORT

Why rugby union must be given a chance to thrive
PAGES 40-48

TELEVISION AND RADIO
PAGES 46, 47

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 1 1996

Retailers demand inquiry into soaring meter charges

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE ELECTRICITY industry will today face a demand from retailers to end what they call arbitrary and unregulated charges on commercial power bills.

The British Retail Consortium, which represents 90 per cent of stores in the country, is to call for an immediate investigation of charges imposed by the electricity pool—the trading mechanism—on meters used by industrial electricity users to enable them to shop around for their power. The call comes after talks between the trade grouping and the

Department of Trade and Industry. The group is to ask the electricity regulator to intervene as fresh indications emerge of a growing protest among business users about the way their electricity bills are made up.

The consortium said it joins J Sainsbury, Royal Mail, Northern Electric and other businesses in demanding an inquiry into the charges on meters, which have more than tripled since large power users were able to buy power competitively two years ago. Sainsbury sparked a revolt among business users in the summer when it refused to pay part of its electricity bill to demonstrate against the jump in the

metering cost. Other retailers and industrial users followed suit. Northern Electric, which as a supplier of electricity must itemise the charge on its bills, weighed into the argument in a company newsletter when it said a further rise in the charge would be unacceptable.

Royal Mail declined to comment yesterday although it is believed to have been active in campaigning against the charge. This year the charge rose from £299 to £565 per meter. James May, Director-General of the Retail Consortium, said the protest was important because the electricity pool was acting in a non-transparent, unaccountable manner.

He said: "These annual charges have

infuriated many of our larger members. Some of the amount ensures that businesses can buy electricity from any supplier, which we welcome. However, a significant percentage of the charge contains a substantial levy for money under recovery. The under-recovery is to recoup previous years' losses incurred by the electricity industry as a result of its own mistakes and inefficiencies."

Ian Taylor, energy manager at Sainsbury, said that a recent suggestion by the electricity pool to freeze the charge was welcome but was "only the first move". He said: "We are concerned that there is too little accountability in electricity as full

competition approaches. There is no consumer representation on the pool. We need far more openness in the industry."

Bob Speares, of the Utilities Buyers Forum, said: "The UBF has taken a stand on these charges and appreciates that the pool executive committee is now recognising customers' concerns."

A spokesman for the electricity pool said: "The pool's charge on suppliers pays the actual costs of operating the 100kWh competitive market with customers gaining significant and sustained price reductions since the market's introduction in 1994."

Letters, page 21

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	3979.1	(+15.2)
FTSE All share	3546	(+4.88)
Nikkei	20466.96	(-214.81)
Dow Jones	6003.66	(+10.43)
S&P Composite	702.00	(+1.10)

US RATE

Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	100 1/2%	(100 1/2%)
Yield	5.68%	(6.70%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth Interbank	6 1/4%	(6 1/4%)
Libor 3m	108 1/2	(108 1/2)

STERLING

New York	1.6277	(1.6326)
London	1.6284	(1.6323)
DM	2.4841	(2.4803)
FF	8.3102	(8.3115)
Sfr	2.0497	(2.0395)
Yen	165.22	(165.89)
S Index	90.2	(90.2)

US DOLLAR

London	1.5141	(1.5110)
FF	1.1147	(1.1015)
Sfr	1.2827	(1.2550)
Yen	113.80	(114.12)
S Index	97.1	(97.0)

Tokyo close Yen 113.30

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Jan)	\$22.70	(\$23.20)
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GOLD

London close	\$379.75	(\$380.15)
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* denotes midday trading price

Fidelity hit by ban on new clients

By Robert Miller

FIDELITY Brokerage, the UK retail stockbroker arm of the world's largest fund manager, was yesterday ordered to cease recruiting new clients until January by a senior City watchdog.

The highly unusual action by the Securities and Futures Authority, regulator for brokers and futures traders, was taken after Fidelity, which has 30,000 private clients, failed to resolve "operational difficulties" resulting from converting to a new computer system and increased volume of business.

The SFA formally stepped in after receiving complaints from clients. The watchdog, headed by Nick Durlacher, told Fidelity that it "will be closely monitoring progress towards the full resolution of these problems by the end of January 1997."

The regulator added: "Should they not have been resolved, the SFA will take further steps as it considers necessary in the interests of investors." The watchdog, which has the power to take disciplinary action if it is not satisfied with the way in which Fidelity tackles its problems, said it would also ensure that customers who had suffered losses "are adequately compensated."

Some Fidelity Brokerage customers have already received compensation for loss of interest after items such as dividend cheques were not credited to the proper accounts on time. Fidelity, part of the world's largest fund management group which looks after nearly £260 billion and is owned by the American family of Edward C. Johnson III, said last night that it would offer "compensation on an ex-gratia basis to any existing customer who has suffered loss as a direct consequence of its computer problems."

Fidelity first announced in May that it was experiencing operational difficulties in bedding down a new multi-million pound computer system. These resulted in "accounting and reconciliation problems and a number of customer complaints". They proved so difficult to overcome that in August the broking firm voluntarily ceased advertising for new business.

Phil West, marketing manager at Fidelity Brokerage, said: "We tested the system exhaustively. But when we went live we became aware of software bugs. The tasks that should have been carried out automatically by the back-office, such as ensuring that dividend cheques arrived at the right place or in the proper account on time, was not happening. We have had to override the computer system and carry out the tasks manually."

Mr West added: "We have lost about 200 clients and obviously that is a matter of great regret to us."

Terry Chapman, chairman of TCA Synergy, a specialist software service company that supplied the TCA settlement system to Fidelity, denied that his firm was to blame. He said: "There were some initial teething problems but these were well within normal limits. The TCA system is not the prime cause of the difficulties." He added that a number of other retail broking firms had installed his company's computer system, including Barclays Stockbrokers last week, and that these had not experienced similar problems.

The SFA action is a deep embarrassment to Fidelity, which has sought to build a world-wide reputation based on prudent fund management on behalf of individuals and institutions such as pension funds.

Pennington, page 27



Brands Hatch worth £34m

By Fraser Nelson

BRANDS HATCH Leisure, the motor racing circuit owner, will be valued at £34.2 million when it joins the stock market next month. The flotation will raise £9.3 million to fuel its shift away from motor racing and towards corporate entertainment.

The company, which also owns the circuits at Oulton Park, Snetterton and Cadwell Park, plans to develop its four sites into all-round leisure complexes. It plans to spend

£5 million over the next two years, refurbishing the grandstands and building two conference centres.

Nicola Foulston, chief executive, hopes to cut the company's dependency on motor racing to just 20 per cent of sales. The group expects to make pre-tax profits of £2.47 million (£1.14 million) in the year to December 31.

The company's first flotation plans were shelved in 1987, when John Foulston,

Nicola's father, died in a motor racing accident. He bought the company from BAT Industries for £5.25 million in 1986. His estate passed into a family trust, and Ms Foulston became chief executive at the age of 24, on an annual salary of £20,000. Now 29, she will become one of the youngest leaders of a UK-listed company and will receive in excess of £150,000 a year.

Tempus, page 28

Eggar applies his energy to new job

By Christine Buckley, Industrial Correspondent

TIM EGGAR, the former Energy Minister, will today assume duties as part-time chairman of an engineering company that gets much of its work from the energy industry.

He will spend more than half a working week at the helm of M W Kellogg, while continuing to meet parliamentary obligations. Mr Eggar joins the company, whose major clients include Shell, BP, Esso, Texaco and Fiat just over three months after quitting his position in the Government, narrowly missing the guidelines laid down by the Advisory Committee on business appointments.

A spokesman for M W Kellogg said that the company's dealings with Mr Eggar while he served at the Department of Trade and Industry were "minimal" although as minister he would have "bumped into" people from Kellogg from time to time. The company would not comment on his salary although it is expected to be a substantial six-figure sum. He could take on full-time work once he leaves the House of Commons at the next election.

Mr Eggar's brief for the Houston-based company is to give strategic guidance for all energy and process-related matters. He led energy policy for the Government from 1992 until July this year.

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Eggar: part-time chairman

British Bus deal referred to MMC

By Keith Rodgers

THE £282 million takeover of British Bus by Cowie Group, the motor and bus company, has been referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission because of government concerns about the effect on competition in the South East.

John Taylor, corporate and consumer affairs Minister, highlighted worries about competition in south London and parts of Surrey and Kent, where part of Cowie's existing operations overlap with British Bus. Cowie, which completed the acquisition in August and has subsequently taken over North East Bus, is now the second-biggest UK operator with 18 per cent of the market.

Cowie Group said it believed

the major concern was that the acquisition gave it 26.4 per cent of the London tendered routes, above the preferred maximum of 25 per cent. It has already rationalised the services to 25.4 per cent since the takeover and said it was prepared to co-operate with the MMC to move below the threshold. Its options include disposal of individual routes and possible route swaps with other operators.

The company added that the referral concerns a small proportion of its operations and claimed the structure of the local services does not operate against the public interest.

Pennington, page 27

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Lloyd's starts timely review

By MARIANNE CURPHY

LLOYD'S of London has officially begun a regulatory review before an expected wide-ranging shake-up of City regulations next year.

The review group will be led by Sir Alan Hardcastle, chairman of Lloyd's Regulatory Board. The board, which acts as an external regulator, will put forward proposals for change in the market so that Lloyd's has significant input into any regulatory amendments drawn up after the general election.

Lloyd's is regulated under a private Act of Parliament, Lloyd's Act 1982, and is largely exempt from the provisions of the Financial Services Act 1986.

Sir Alan said: "The Lloyd's market... is very different from the market of the past and it will continue to change. This review... will recommend how our regulatory arrangements should be developed. It is imperative to ensure that the sharp lessons of the past have been properly learnt."

The review group is inviting written submissions and plans to report to the Council of Lloyd's before the middle of 1997.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank	Bank
	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.15	1.98
Austria Sch	13.51	12.81
Belgium Fr	53.67	48.37
Canada \$	2.28	2.12
Cyprus Cyp£	0.782	0.727
Denmark Kr	10.02	9.22
Finland Mk	7.94	7.29
France Fr	8.70	8.05
Germany DM	2.85	2.41
Greece Dr	2.311	2.051
Hong Kong \$	13.22	12.22
Ireland Pt	1.05	0.97
Israel Sh	5.61	4.98
Italy Lit	2070	2450
Japan Yen	198.90	182.80
Malta	0.822	0.567
Netherlands Gld	2.311	2.051
New Zealand \$	2.45	2.23
Norway Kr	10.94	10.14
Portugal Esc	200.00	241.50
S Africa Rd	8.30	7.50
Spain Ps	215.50	200.50
Sweden Kr	11.21	10.51
Switzerland Fr	2.18	2.00
Turkey Lira	150.00	150.00
USA \$	1.725	1.596

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.



Roger Leverton, left, and Sir Nigel Rudd, chairman of Pilkington, reflect on a much lower £75 million halfway profit

US car pick-up softens the blow at Pilkington

By CLARE STEWART

DEMAND from the booming car industry in North America helped Pilkington, the glass company, partially offset the impact of difficult market conditions in Europe.

Pre-tax profits fell to £75 million from £104 million after exceptional items in the six months to the end of September, in line with market expectations after this year's profit warnings. Earnings per share fell from 7.3p to 4p, while the dividend in hand at last year's 1.75p. There was an exception-

al charge of £7 million arising from the sale of the Barnes-Hind contact lens business, the last part of the Visioncare division to be sold.

Roger Leverton, chief executive, said group results were "a little disappointing," adding: "We have seen improvements and these figures reflect a temporary setback in some elements of our business."

Difficulties in the building products markets in Europe knocked the biggest hole in first half performance. Operating profits in this area, which accounts for around 39

per cent of group turnover, fell 42 per cent to £52 million.

Pilkington points to the rapid fall in the clear float glass price seen from the second half of last year. In Europe, prices fell 12 per cent while Germany, especially hard hit by severe winter weather which stopped construction, saw prices crash by 25 per cent.

The impact of these price falls was softened by more stable conditions in related markets, such as the supply of float glass for double glazing units. Demand in North

America remained strong while in South America there was a profit improvement in Argentina and Chile.

Profits in the automotive products division, which supplies glass to manufacturers such as Ford, General Motors and Fiat, nearly doubled to £54 million, with sales ahead 27 per cent to £692 million.

Volumes were particularly strong in North America, helped by record levels of car production, while in Europe sales doubled, reflecting the contribution of the Italian glassmaker SIV.

Looking ahead to the year end Sir Nigel Rudd, chairman, said he expected to see "an improving trend in the second half". Both prices and volumes have strengthened in Europe he noted and businesses in North and South America are expected to continue their strong run.

Analysts are expecting full year profits of around £190 million, with a dividend of 3.3p.

Tempus, page 28

Labour holds fire on board policy

By GRAHAM SEARJEANT
FINANCIAL EDITOR

THE Labour Party appeared to stand back from encouraging companies to have two-tier boards of directors ahead of a predictably hostile report from the Confederation of British Industry.

Stuart Bell, Shadow Minister for Corporate Affairs, said Labour's policy was to change the ethos of companies to make them more "inclusive", but that legal prescription was not the best way. Mr Bell said Labour had raised the possibility of legislating for an optional two-tier structure but was aware of the CBI view and would study the report carefully.

In *Boards Without Tiers*, the CBI strongly opposes representatives of anyone except the whole body of shareholders sharing in the governance of companies. It opposes a two-tier structure because it could be an excuse for other stakeholders to infiltrate the upper-tier supervisory board. That would revive fears of the CBI's long-standing bugbear: workers on the board.

Martin Broughton, chief executive of BAT Industries and chairman of the CBI's company committee, said: "Putting the interests of shareholders first should continue to be the goal for boards of directors and the measure against which they are held to account."

The report argues against forcing managers to balance the interests of different stakeholders. Imposing wider responsibilities "would be to move from a position where directors may be held accountable, and in which their duties are clear, to a position where their duties are unclear and they might not in reality be accountable to anyone for anything."

The CBI praises the present unitary, non-representative, board with non-executive directors, on the pattern recommended by the Cadbury committee on financial aspects of corporate governance. But it suggests that non-executive directors might have lighter legal responsibilities.

The report is the CBI's contribution to the Hampel committee, which is looking at how the Cadbury code is working and whether further changes in corporate governance are needed.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

OFT warning starts Vodafone changes

VODAFONE became the first company to yield to the threat of legal action from John Bridgeman, head of the Office of Fair Trading, by ending stipulations in phone contracts judged to transgress fair trading laws. The mobile phone network company, which owns four major providers of mobile phone services, has agreed to drop the disconnection charge of £50 plus VAT; to cut the requirement for users to give 90 days notice of termination of contracts to one month; to curb wide-ranging rights to increase prices; and to allow customers to withdraw from contracts if the price climbs too high.

Mr Bridgeman had warned nine companies that they faced legal action if they did not amend controversial contracts that have been the focus of campaigning by consumer groups. Yesterday he said Vodafone "has considerably improved the contracts overall". Other companies have yet to meet the conditions. But the competitive nature of the market is expected to bring similar concessions across the industry.

Irish bosses back EMU

COMPANY directors in the Irish Republic strongly support full participation in the European Monetary Union, according to a survey released yesterday by the Institute of Directors in Ireland. It found that 91 per cent of respondents wanted the Republic to be in the first group to join the single currency. Asked what Ireland should do if Britain remains outside EMU, 87 per cent said the Republic should press ahead. Most directors felt EMU would be good for the economy and their businesses. But over 70 per cent admitted they had not considered the issue in any great depth.

Help for Telekom rivals

THE European Commission is expected to attach further conditions to Deutsche Telekom's plans to grant price discounts to big customers, EU sources said yesterday. The move is to ensure that business rivals can compete effectively with Telekom in Germany. Although the conditions will further dent Telekom's dominant position in the German market, they are not expected to upset its stock market flotation on November 18. The Commission's decision will allow it to proceed with discounts of up to 35 per cent to large business clients from today.

Conoco record attempt

CONOCO, the American oil company, has commissioned a new drilling vessel capable of drilling wells in water depths greater than ever before achieved. The \$200-million drillship will be able to operate in depths up to 10,000 ft, using satellite positioning technology. Conoco will build the ship in joint venture with Reading & Bates, the drilling company, as part of a \$400 million five-year drilling programme in the Gulf of Mexico. Conoco said that the vessel would be capable of going beyond the record depth set by Shell at 7,600 ft in the Gulf of Mexico.

US deal for Memory

MEMORY CORPORATION, the troubled AIM-listed microchip repairer, embarked on the first stage of its recovery yesterday by agreeing to license its technology to a US electronics company. The deal marks the company's first move into technology licensing, where previously it only sold the repaired chips that its devices produce. It was forced out of the market earlier in the year, when the average price of perfect chips plunged from \$400 to \$70. Memory Corporation's shares rose 10p yesterday, closing at 65p. They traded at 53½p last year, and fell as low as 22½p in September.

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*Free Eurostar tickets are subject to seat availability. Due to demand, free tickets are not available for travel from December 21, 1996 to January 5, 1997 and March 23, 1997 to April 10, 1997 inclusive. Abridged terms and conditions appeared in Monday's paper and will appear again on November 16. Full terms and conditions will be included with your information pack.

CHANGING TIMES

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□ A cheaper way of raising cash? □ Work piles up at the MMC □ Computer chaos at Fidelity

Blunting the Damoclean sword

□ SCHROEDERS conducted a little experiment yesterday. One of our more go-ahead merchant banks decided to see if, as enemies of the existing system of cash-raising have insisted, there is an appetite for a cheaper method. To put it more bluntly, has the City been overcharging its clients for decades?

This is of more than hypothetical interest because of the Damoclean sword that has been hanging over the City in the form of a reference of fees and commissions to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. The Office of Fair Trading has been looking at this since March last year and has sought the views of the finance directors of our 250 biggest companies, some of whom have already been vociferous on the need for change.

Opposition has also come from big international investment banks that can expect to benefit from the introduction of the sort of book-building common in New York, even if there is no proof this is cheaper for clients. The Big Bang a decade ago was triggered by a similar OFT inquiry into the old stock-broking traditions. Clever new ways of cutting the cost to companies of the ordinary rights issue would increase the latter's chances of survival.

Two thirds of the £222 million

cash call arranged by Schroders for Stakis to fund the Metropole deal was along traditional lines. Schroders gets 0.5 per cent as an underwriting commission, Merrill Lynch 0.25 per cent as the broker that arranges the immediate sub-underwriting with institutions. These last take 1.5 per cent to cover the six weeks they will be at risk, the period during which Stakis shares can fall out of bed before they go to existing investors.

The other third of the issue those institutions had to tender for. The lower the rate of fee they were prepared to accept, the more shares they got, subject to a sensible maximum. The average rate this produced was then applied to the other fees on the deal. If institutions were prepared to cut their rates to take on the same risk, the experiment should show this.

In the event institutions were prepared to trim their rates, but not by much. Stakis will pay £400,000 less in fees than it would under the old system, but potentially it could have saved more than £1 million.

So whither now? The Schroders innovation, a limited one, could be extended further, say by having the entire rights issue subject to the same tendering process to produce the lowest possible rate of fees. As an alternative, the Stakis rights provided a cap: institutions could not bid for extra stock at a higher commission than the 1.5 per cent they were already getting. Take an especially risky rights issue of a company whose future might be in doubt, or in a dicey market. Remove the cap. Force fees higher, to reflect the precise risk, rather than having the issue fail entirely.

Rules of Monopoly need changing

□ WHAT is the strange allure that takeovers involving bus companies exert on the Monopolies and Mergers Commission? The MMC was already looking at two such deals when a third, Cowie's purchase of British Bus, was slipped to it on the advice of the Office of Fair Trading.



The answer is that competition authorities are required to look at any situation that might create an unhealthy concentration of market power or a monopoly. Without wishing to prejudice any of the deals under consideration, mergers between bus companies or their purchase of railways are generally designed to bring about just that.

But the arrival at the MMC of yet another deal stretches an already strained workload. The Commission is also considering two companies thrown to it by exasperated regulators, British Gas TransCo and Northern Ireland Electricity. There are debates over Scottish milk, Kent water, and a look at the activities

of Scottish estate agents and solicitors that one can only hope ends badly for both parties. There is the long inquiry into electrical goods, which by the time it ends will have clocked up a full year on the meter.

It could shortly get much busier. Forget rights issues. Within days the OFT will hand over its views on the Bass-Carlson-Tetley merger. The odds, initially in favour of the deal going through, are tilting towards an MMC reference. There will soon be a ruling on Booker's purchase of Nurdin & Peacock, and the delay so far does not suggest that all has been plain sailing.

Busier still, if some of the expected rush of pre-election bids such as this week's for Northern Electricity have to be referred. These inquiries are such long-winded affairs because every business that could conceivably be affected, and every pipsqueak trade body, has to be given time to grind its respective axe. This is all commendably fair and British, but the eventual findings that emerge do not always justify

the time taken, or the delays imposed on those parties involved who just want to get on with business.

A bad workman blames his tools

□ THE dawning of the information age has provided many benefits to mankind, not the least being the perfect electronic scapegoat. In another time, it might have been witches or pixies, now it is the computer systems and their uncontrollable fits of rage that get the blame. The latest riot in cyberspace took place at Fidelity Brokerage Services, where one of the most embarrassing foul-ups by any stockbroker in years is blamed on our old friend "operational difficulties" resulting from converting to a new computer system. That and increased volume of business, we're victims of our own success, you see. The first is exactly the same excuse being peddled a few weeks ago by British Gas, as it sent the bailiffs around to blame

less customers. There are two lessons to be learned from computers. They do not go wrong of their own accord, they have to be rendered inoperable by human hand. The second is that any new system will indeed be rendered inoperable, and for longer than anyone could have predicted, so test them first, do not test them on your customers.

Fidelity is being forced to shut up shop for three months to deal with the relatively light task of ensuring this summer's PEP statements to clients are correct and clearing up 85 outstanding complaints. There was some tosh being talked about it being the company's choice, but clearly the SFA has acted firmly and decisively. Good thing too.

Q&A session

□ QUOTE of the week comes from the National Association of Pension Funds, on future pension liabilities across the EC. "We don't have answers because we don't know what questions to ask." True, but start with these three and see how they simplify matters. How much money is short? Who will have to find it? And now for a multiple choice: will the average Briton be a) better off, or b) worse off as a result of being in EMU when the final bill has to be paid?

Wace plunges on shake-up proposal

By JASON NISSE

NEARLY half the value of shares in Wace, which produces pre-publication images for advertising agencies and magazines, was lost yesterday after the company announced a big restructuring which will send it into losses.

The shake-up is the second implemented by Trevor Grice, who took over as chief executive in 1993. He oversaw a recovery in the company's shares from 40p to 260p but yesterday they lost 65p to close at just 69½p.

Mr Grice is to close the company's printing plant in Glasgow, with the loss of 59 jobs, sell the magazine-imaging side in the US and look for joint ventures for most of the

rest of the US business as well as putting on the block some small operations in Holland and France which have been making money. The net effect will be write-offs totalling £9 million. The company, which analysts had been expecting to report a healthy £18 million profit this year, is now likely to report a small loss.

Wace is trying to expand in digital imaging, which creates pictures, diagrams and production layout-out for the print medium or on CD-Rom. The City is cautious about Wace's future. "Some of the businesses we were told a couple of years ago were growth prospects are being ditched," said one analyst.

Downstream pressures hold back Shell profits

By CARL MORTSHED

COLLAPSING margins in refining and chemicals spoil the benefit of a higher oil price for the Royal Dutch/Shell group.

The price of Brent crude reached its highest level since the Gulf War during Shell's third quarter but, while the company's three-month earnings from the sale of oil and gas almost doubled from the previous year, profits from chemicals and refining fell sharply.

Shell blamed competitive pressures and higher raw material costs for the setback in its downstream businesses. Measured on a current cost basis and excluding special

items, group earnings fell 7 per cent to £1.1 billion during the three months to September compared with the third quarter of 1995. For the first nine months, earnings grew only 5 per cent to £3.8 billion.

The stock market reacted badly to the news and shares in Shell Transport & Trading slipped 14p to £10.06. However, analysts suggested the results were not out of line with most forecasts and pointed to the recent sharp rise in Shell Transport stock. "They needed very good figures to justify the share price," one commented.

Profits from exploration and production soared thanks to the oil price and increased output. Crude oil production was up 5

per cent, while gas production rose 10 per cent and the company claimed a reduction in unit operating costs which helped to boost margins.

Upstream earnings rose 92 per cent to £599 million during the period but Shell yesterday predicted further volatility in the oil price. During the third quarter, Brent blend averaged \$20.90 per barrel, up \$1.40 from the previous quarter and a \$4.75 increase from the same period last year.

Shell's chemical earnings suffered a squeeze from declining prices and the rising cost of feedstocks, mainly crude oil. Earnings on a current cost basis fell 40 per cent to £189 million in the third quarter

excluding an \$84 million gain from the sale of its fine chemicals business to Inspec.

Refining margins continue to hurt profits in Shell's downstream businesses. Since the second quarter, margins halved in the Gulf, while in Asia they collapsed from \$3 per barrel to \$1.70. Shell said that marketing continued to provide the main contribution to earnings which on a current cost basis fell 27 per cent to £422 million.

Shell's net income, including the benefit of stockholding gains rose 26 per cent to £1.3 billion in the quarter.

Tempus, page 28
Oil revenues up, page 32

Debut for Thomas the Tank Engine

By JASON NISSE AND KEITH RODGERS

BRITT Allcroft Company, which brought *Thomas the Tank Engine* to stardom, yesterday announced a £30.6 million float and Caspian, the leisure group, said that it was selling a portfolio of TV shows including *Paddington Bear* and *The Wombles* for £10.5 million.

Caspian, which recently bought Leeds United Football Club for £16.5 million, is to use some of the money to fund a bid for the Sheffield Steelers, one of Britain's leading ice hockey teams, which is on sale for £4 million.

Cinar, the Canadian film maker, is paying £5.5 million in cash plus a mixture of shares and debt replacements

for Caspian's children's character business, which was bought for only £1.75 million in 1991. The operation was loss making and contributed to an £80,000 pre-tax deficit for Caspian in the first half of this year.

Dealing in shares of Britt Allcroft starts next Wednesday. The company plans to place 8.5 million shares at 130p per share and issue 3.8 million new shares to raise £4.2 million net.

The husband and wife team of Angus Wright and Britt Allcroft will each own 13.1 per cent of the shares. Ringo Starr, the former Beatle, has a stake with a value of more than £1.5 million.

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Surge of US interest in generators' shares

THE London stock market was lit up as American investors came pouring in for shares of Britain's power generators.

PowerGen led the way with a leap of 18p to 510p in heavy turnover that saw 4.59 million shares change hands. National Power was sought, up 13p to 407p on turnover of 6.16 million shares. Demand also spilled over into ScottishPower, 7p better at 314p, and Scottish Hydro, up 1p at 275p.

Brokers said there was no mention of a bid to drive prices higher. Instead, it seems PowerGen has been in the US talking to institutional investors in an attempt to soothe any concern they may have about the threat of a windfall tax if Labour is returned at the general election.

PowerGen is said to be relaxed about the whole affair. Its message seems to have gone down well with the Americans, who have been quick to latch on to the fact that the GenCos have been left behind by the rest of the market in recent months.

The rest of the equity market recovered some of its poise in the wake of Wednesday's rate rise. Selective institutional support enabled the FT-SE 100 index to recover an early 12-point fall before closing at its best of the day at 3,979.1.

Sentiment was given a further boost towards the close by the latest Chicago purchasing managers' index and personal income and jobless claims. All eyes will be focused later today on the non-farm payroll numbers.

The relaxation of rules governing media ownership came into force at midnight, with the introduction of the Broadcasting Act. Under the new rules companies can own television and broadcasting licences amounting to 15 per cent of the audience. It means that the smaller companies are likely to be swallowed up.

Top of the list is HTV, up 3p to 378p. Only last week, United News & Media paid 574 million for Scottish Television's near 20 per cent stake.

It is now thought Scottish will turn its attention to Grampian Television, up 27p to 327p. There is also a real prospect that Granada, 6p better at 884p, will eventually launch a bid for Yorkshire Television, up 25p to 512p, where it has a



Granada, which makes Coronation Street, was up 6p

sizable holding. Cookson Group fell 10p to 226p after ABN Amro Hoare Govett, the broker, turned bearish. It is reckoned to have cut its pre-tax profits forecast for the current year by £7 million to £171 million and for 1997 by £6 million to £190 million.

A survey claiming Asda is the fastest growing food retailer. Dalgety rose 4p to 311p despite talk of a downgrading from BZW after a visit by brokers to its pet food operations in France. It is reckoned to have cut its current-year forecast by £5 million to £110 million and for next year by £6 million to £121 million. Turnover reached 4.25 million shares.

er in Britain, lifted the shares 41p to 172p. J Salans, which reported a drop in half-year profits on Wednesday, firmed 1p to 36p.

Shares in Lomond continued to lose ground, falling another 1p to a new low of 149p after the announcement of the £327 million disposal of its Metropole chain to Stakis. Lomond lost ground earlier this week after Dieter Bock

announced plans to sell his 18 per cent stake to Anglo American. The South African group now has 26 per cent of Lomond. To help to finance the acquisition Stakis is raising £222 million by way of a four-for-five rights issue at 82p. The shares firmed 1p to 99p.

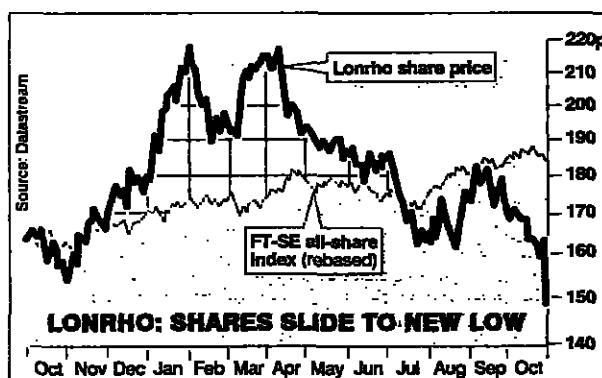
A better outlook for glass prices enabled Pilkington to firm 2p to 171p in spite of confirmation of a downturn in pre-tax profits from £104 million to £75 million in the first six months of 1996.

A profit setback in the third quarter from Shell upset the market and left the price 13p lower at £10.07. Vodafone firmed 1p to 237p after receiving a rap across the knuckles from the Office of Fair Trading over its airtime contracts. Brokers said the

confirmation of a downturn in pre-tax profits from £104 million to £75 million in the first six months of 1996.

In long, Treasury 8 per cent 2015 fell 1/8 to £101 1/8, while at the shorter end, Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was seven ticks off at £103 1/2.

NEW YORK: Wall Street shares were higher in early trading because of strength in the bond market and the high-technology sector. However analysts said that the market was quiet. At midday, the Dow Jones industrial average was up 10.43 points to 6,003.66.



LONRHO: SHARES SLIDE TO NEW LOW

outcome could have been worse and breathed a sigh of relief. Contract alterations are now being made.

Eadie Holdings tumbled 6 1/2p to a new low of 12 1/2p after issuing a profits warning. Just Group was unchanged at 3p after diving into the red at the half-way stage, but a similar move by Club International left the shares 1p cheaper at 20 1/2p.

Independent Energy shed 8p to 79p after warning that losses were likely to be higher than previously indicated because of delays in connecting new generating plants to the electricity network.

Jardiner Interiors made an encouraging start on AIM following a placing at 114p. The group, which supplies plants for offices, started at 129p and touched a peak of 132 1/2p before closing at 125p.

Mondas, the computer software specialist, also opened at a premium in first-time dealings on AIM. Offered at 76p, the price ended at its best of the day with a rise of 1 1/2p to 90 1/2p.

Perkins Foods slipped 2p to 84p after hitting the acquisition trail. It is paying £15.6 million for Disselco Group, the Dutch food distributor. Virtually all the proceeds will be raised by way of a one-for-six rights issue at 74p.

GILT-EDGED: Prices continued to lose ground in reaction to Wednesday's quarter point rise in bank base rates to 6 per cent — the first such rise in two years.

Investors were also taking a cautious view of events ahead of today's US employment figures, which it is feared could trigger an increase in American interest rates ahead of next week's presidential election.

Index-linked issues were badly hit. In the futures pit, the December series of the Long Gilt fell 1/8 to £109 1/8, while the series for 1997 fell 1/4 to £108 1/4.

NEW YORK: Wall Street shares were higher in early trading because of strength in the bond market and the high-technology sector. However analysts said that the market was quiet. At midday, the Dow Jones industrial average was up 10.43 points to 6,003.66.

New York (midday)	
Dow Jones	6003.66 (+10.43)
S&P Composite	703.00 (+1.10)
Tokyo	
Nikkei Average	20446.36 (+21.81)
Hong Kong	
Hang Seng	12477.50 (+72.09)
Amsterdam	
Euro Index	377.02 (+0.07)
Sydney	
ASX	2393.22 (+13.5)
Frankfurt	
DAX	2094.25 (+14.48)
Singapore	
Strait Times	2083.23 (+0.79)
Brussels	
General	988.60 (+4.43)
Paris	
CAC-40	2140.57 (+15.79)
Zurich	
SEA Gen	278.00 (+0.70)

London	
FT 100	3979.1 (+12.5)
FTSE 100	3979.1 (+12.5)
FTSE 250	4422.5 (+3.3)
FTSE 350	1982.7 (+5.4)
FTSE 1000	1747.4 (+7.53)
FT All-Share	1056.9 (+4.48)
FT Non Financials	2046.36 (+4.10)
FT Financials	1153.35 (+1.11)
FT Govt Secs	96.99 (+0.01)
SEAO Volume	656.7m
USM (Datastream)	303.13 (+1.69)
USM	1.6285 (+0.004)
German Mark	2.454 (+0.0022)
Exchange Index	90.2 (rebased)
Bank of England official rate (4pm)	6%
ECBU	1.2794
ECBU	1.1222
RPI	153.8 Sep (2.1%) Jan 1987=100
RPIX	153.6 Sep (2.0%) Jan 1987=100

Beechcroft	
Charles Taylor	161
Deep Sea Leisure	1574
Delecta (150)	159
Ele Retail Sys	170 + 4
Eurasia Mining	305
Fitness First	90
Gen Interactive (100)	11
Harstone 8% Cum	12
Healthcare Reform	994
Imperial Tobacco	358
Interoute Tele	164
Jardiner Interiors	125
John David Sports	298
Lavender	151
Lotus Road (72)	75
Lomond Under	130
Mears Group	11
Mondas	90
Orion Resturms	209
Thames House (170)	257
Ultra Electronics	1574
Victory Corp	54

Brooks Tool n/p (125)	
Calum Energy n/p (360)	2
Capital Inds n/p (175)	134
Celsis Int'l n/p (100)	1
Cycle Bikes n/p (265)	19
Europart n/p (145)	19
Prism n/p (240)	120

MAJOR CHANGES

RISERS	
Honeywell	37p (+10p)
Geosource Group	291p (+20p)
Corbion	205p (+20p)
Selwyn	384p (+10p)
Paragon	558p (+10p)
Pet City	507p (+10p)
Airtours	663p (+12p)
FALLS	
Berkley Cap	613p (-17p)
Stagecoach	588p (-11p)
Biochem Int'l	535p (-10p)
Fine Art Dev	458p (-10p)
Wilson Bowden	450p (-10p)
Paragon	558p (-10p)
Parkland	174p (-7p)

Closing Prices Page 31

Shell's piggy bank

SHELL'S third-quarter earnings decline should have been no surprise. The warnings were fulsome in the form of the dreadful downstream margins recently reported by Shell's competitors.

While pure exploration companies enjoy the high-altitude exhilaration of \$23 oil prices, an integrated oil company suffers the cost of refining expensive crude. More to the point, passing on that higher cost to a market oversupplied with gasoline is difficult, and it is interesting to note that marketing, not refining, made up the bulk of earnings in the downstream business. Evidently, the big oil companies are making more money at the pumps as they burn banknotes in their refineries.

Upstream, Shell is doing well, notwithstanding an unusually high exploration write-off. Gas production was up an impressive 10 per cent (no doubt helped by British Gas's decision to shut in production at Morecambe Bay) and unit costs are still coming down. In short, the operating picture looks good. What is of concern is what is happening to cash.

To be precise, what is not happening to cash is a concern. Shell had £8 billion in the bank in September, and capital expenditure was almost static at £1.9 billion for the quarter. Having failed to replace its oil production for years, Shell desperately needs to invest heavily — the company aims to raise its annual spend by about 30 per cent — but there was little evidence in the figures.

Optimists might say Shell is doing more while spending less. Pessimists may wonder whether the Shell committee men are still in control after last year's job shake-out. Either way, there is still too much cash in the bank.

Body Shop

GORDON RODDICK wants the Body Shop to enjoy "balanced growth" — a sensible ambition and, no doubt, one that the shareholders would endorse. Unfortunately, the company is a long way from achieving it, with yesterday's results showing growth to be very low.

Asia is terrific, with like-for-like sales up 8 per cent. The company plans to open in Korea within the next few months, and there are other untapped but promising markets among the Asian Tigers.

On the flip side is the United States, the most disappointing and worrying market. Like-for-like sales were down 4 per cent, after last year's 8 per cent fall. Competition in that market is fierce. Although some of Body Shop's American rivals

are beginning to flag, the principal competitor, Bath and Body Works, is not. To be fair, new US management has only just been in place for six weeks, so it is too early to judge its effectiveness. What is certain is that the management is starting from a weak position.

In the UK, the high street boom seems to have largely bypassed the Body Shop, and sales were up only 1 per cent, like-for-like. With the market becoming ever more competitive, and companies such as Virgin planning to enter the branded cosmetics business next year, it would be more comforting to see the Body Shop doing well. Life is not going to get any easier.

Pilkington

AN EXCELLENT firm in a rubbish industry. That was the view of one forthright analyst, predicting Pilkington's interim figures. Not everyone would describe it as Pilkington has made sterling efforts to get back into shape after the costly diversification of the late 1980s.

The benefits of the group's restructuring programme, including big job cuts and cost reductions, will gradually flow through to profit. Nevertheless, Pilkington finds itself bogged down in a soggy market with European building products in recession. Pilkington reports a recent firming of glass prices and stronger volumes but given the weak growth forecasts for European construction, the outlook is gloom.

The motor industry, particularly in the US, is a better customer and sales of glass to car manufacturers are powering ahead. In Europe,

Pilkington has gained market shares but faces a head-on battle with rival St Gobain and prices may be squeezed if the French group agrees to regular market leadership. Analysts have trimmed forecasts to the £185 million to £190 million range, with earnings per share down from 14p to around 10p. More news of improvement in Europe may help rally shares in the short term but after its recent underperformance, analysts are not yet banking on a sparkling recovery.

Brands Hatch

Brands Hatch Leisure plc is an attempt to bottle the birthplace of British motor racing and serve it up as corporate hospitality. In the unfortunate choice of words of its chief executive, Brands Hatch is "adult entertainment". In essence an all-round, hands-on, gas-guzzling funfair for people with large wallets and racing hairlines.

While the result may be a slightly classier version of Alton Towers, it is some sound business logic. There are no shortage of executives willing to pay a high price to live out their fantasies. For many, a visit to Brands Hatch is a form of pilgrimage, and those attending the ground may well be mesmerised into parting with even more cash.

But how much time will its reputation buy it? It has not hosted the Grand Prix in ten years, and now that racing circuits are only allowed to collect gate money from the collection, the new Brands Hatch management is less keen to bid for it.

So dependent on corporate entertaining allowances, Brands Hatch should have a decent run until the next recession. But it is unlikely that the management will be able to sprinkle the Brands Hatch magic on their other three racecourses.

COMMODITIES									
LIFEL			[CIS-18 London (8:00p)] CRUDE OILS (\$/barrel FOB)				GNI LONDON FUTURE		
COCOA							WHEAT (cove 1/0)		BARLEY cove 1/0
Dec	97	101.00	Nov	97	23.70	-0.45	Nov	97	95.25
Mar	98	99.85	Mar	98	23.10	-0.45	Mar	98	93.25
Jun	98	97.65	Jun	98	22.70	-0.45	Jun	98	91.25
Sep	98	96.00	Sep	98	22.60	-0.55	Mar	99	94.75
Dec	98	94.00	Dec	98	22.60	-0.55	May	99	92.75
Mar	99	92.00	Mar	99	22.60	-0.55	Aug	99	90.75
Jun	99	90.00	Jun	99	22.60	-0.55	Nov	99	88.75
Sep	99	88.00	Sep	99	22.60	-0.55	Feb	00	86.75
Dec	99	86.00	Dec	99	22.60	-0.55	May	00	84.75
Mar	00	84.00	Mar	00	22.60	-0.55	Aug	00	82.75
Jun	00	82.00	Jun	00	22.60	-0.55	Nov	00	80.75
Sep	00	80.00	Sep	00	22.60	-0.55	Feb	01	78.75
Dec	00	78.00	Dec	00	22.60	-0.55	May	01	76.75
Mar	01	76.00	Mar	01	22.60	-0.55	Aug	01	74.75
Jun	01	74.00	Jun	01	22.60	-0.55	Nov	01	72.75
Sep	01	72.00	Sep	01	22.60	-0.55	Feb	02	70.75
Dec	01	70.00	Dec	01	22.60	-0.55	May	02	68.75
Mar	02	68.00	Mar	02	22.60	-0.55	Aug	02	66.75
Jun	02	66.00	Jun	02	22.60	-0.55	Nov	02	64.75
Sep	02	64.00	Sep	02	22.60	-0.55	Feb	03	62.75
Dec	02	62.00	Dec	02	22.60	-0.55	May	03	60.75
Mar	03	60.00	Mar	03	22.60	-0.55	Aug	03	58.75
Jun	03	58.00	Jun	03	22.60	-0.55	Nov	03	56.75
Sep	03	56.00	Sep	03	22.60	-0.55	Feb	04	54.75
Dec	03	54.00	Dec	03	22.60	-0.55	May	04	52.75
Mar	04	52.00	Mar	04	22.60	-0.55	Aug	04	50.75
Jun	04	50.00	Jun	04	22.60	-0.55	Nov	04	48.75
Sep	04	48.00	Sep	04	22.60	-0.55	Feb	05	46.75
Dec	04	46.00	Dec	04	22.60	-0.55	May	05	44.75
Mar	05	44.00	Mar	05	22.60	-0.55	Aug	05	42.75
Jun	05	42.00	Jun	05	22.60	-0.55	Nov	05	40.75
Sep	05	40.00	Sep	05	22.60	-0.55	Feb	06	38.75
Dec	05	38.00	Dec	05	22.60	-0.55	May	06	36.75
Mar	06	36.00	Mar	06	22.60	-0.55	Aug	06	34.75
Jun	06	34.00	Jun	06	22.60	-0.55	Nov	06	32.75
Sep	06	32.00	Sep	06	22.60	-0.55	Feb	07	30.75
Dec	06	30.00	Dec	06	22.60	-0.55	May	07	28.75
Mar	07	28.00	Mar	07	22.60	-0.55	Aug	07	26.75
Jun	07	26.00	Jun	07	22.60	-0.55	Nov	07	24.75
Sep	07	24.00	Sep	07	22.60	-0.55	Feb	08	22.75
Dec	07	22.00	Dec	07	22.60	-0.55	May	08	20.75
Mar	08	20.00	Mar	08	22.60	-0.55	Aug	08	18.75
Jun	08	18.00	Jun	08	22.60	-0.55	Nov	08	16.75
Sep	08	16.00	Sep	08	22.60	-0.55	Feb	09	14.75
Dec	08	14.00	Dec	08	22.60	-0.55	May	09	12.75
Mar	09	12.00	Mar	09	22.60	-0.55	Aug	09	10.75
Jun	09	10.00	Jun	09	22.60	-0.55	Nov	09	8.75
Sep	09	8.00	Sep	09	22.60	-0.55	Feb	10	6.75
Dec	09	6.00	Dec	09	22.60	-0.55	May	10	4.75
Mar	10	4.00	Mar	10	22.60	-0.55	Aug	10	2.75
Jun	10	2.00	Jun	10	22.60	-0.55	Nov	10	0.75
Sep	10	0.00	Sep	10	22.60	-0.55	Feb	11	-1.75
Dec	10	-1.00	Dec	10	22.60	-0.55	May	11	-3.75
Mar	11	-3.00	Mar	11	22.60	-0.55	Aug	11	-5.75
Jun	11	-5.00	Jun	11	22.60	-0.55	Nov	11	-7.75
Sep	11	-7.00	Sep	11	22.60	-0.55	Feb	12	-9.75
Dec	11	-9.00	Dec	11	22.60	-0.55	May	12	-11.75
Mar	12	-11.00	Mar	12	22.60	-0.55	Aug	12	-13.75
Jun	12	-13.00	Jun	12	22.60	-0.55	Nov	12	-15.75
Sep	12	-15.00	Sep	12	22.60	-0.55	Feb	13	-17.75
Dec	12	-17.00	Dec	12	22.60	-0.55	May	13	-19.75
Mar	13	-19.00	Mar	13	22.60	-0.55	Aug	13	-21.75
Jun	13	-21.00	Jun	13	22.60	-0.55	Nov	13	-23.75
Sep	13	-23.00	Sep	13	22.60	-0.55	Feb	14	-25.75
Dec	13	-25.00	Dec	13	22.60	-0.55	May	14	-27.75
Mar	14	-27.00	Mar	14	22.60	-0.55	Aug	14	-29.75
Jun	14	-29.00	Jun	14	22.60	-0.55	Nov	14	-31.75
Sep	14	-31.00	Sep	14	22.60	-0.55	Feb	15	-33.75
Dec	14	-33.00	Dec	14	22.60	-0.55	May	15	-35.75
Mar	15	-35.00	Mar	15	22.60	-0.55	Aug	15	-37.75
Jun	15	-37.00	Jun	15	22.60	-0.55	Nov	15	-39.75
Sep	15	-39.00	Sep	15	22.60	-0.55	Feb	16	-41.75
Dec	15	-41.00	Dec	15	22.60	-0.55	May	16	-43.75
Mar	16	-43.00	Mar	16	22.60	-0.55	Aug	16	-45.75
Jun	16	-45.00	Jun	16	22.60	-0.55	Nov	16	-47.75
Sep	16	-47.00	Sep	16	22.60	-0.55	Feb	17	-49.75
Dec	16	-49.00	Dec	16	22.60	-0.55	May	17	-51.75
Mar	17	-51.00	Mar	17	22.60	-0.55	Aug	17	-53.75
Jun	17	-53.00	Jun	17	22.60	-0.55	Nov	17	-55.75
Sep	17	-55.00	Sep	17	22.60	-0.55	Feb	18	-57.75
Dec	17	-57.00	Dec	17	22.60	-0.55	May	18	-59.75
Mar	18	-59.00	Mar	18	22.60	-0.55	Aug	18	-61.75
Jun	18	-61.00	Jun	18	22.60	-0.55	Nov	18	-63.75
Sep	18	-63.00	Sep	18	22.60	-0.55	Feb	19	-65.75
Dec	18	-65.00	Dec	18	22.60	-0.55	May	19	-67.75
Mar	19	-67.00	Mar	19	22.60	-0.55	Aug	19	-69.75
Jun	19	-69.00	Jun	19	22.60	-0.55	Nov	19	-71.75
Sep	19	-71.00	Sep	19	22.60	-0.55	Feb	20	-73.75
Dec	19	-73.00	Dec	19	22.60	-0.55	May	20	-75.75
Mar	20	-75.00	Mar	20	22.60	-0.55	Aug	20	-77.75
Jun	20	-77.00	Jun	20	22.60	-0.55	Nov	20	-79.75
Sep	20	-79.00	Sep	20	22.60	-0.55	Feb	21	-81.75
Dec	20	-81.00	Dec	20	22.60	-0.55	May	21	-83.75
Mar	21	-83.00	Mar	21	22.60	-0.55	Aug	21	-85.75
Jun	21	-85.00	Jun	21	22.60	-0.55	Nov	21	-87.75
Sep	21	-87.00	Sep	21	22.60	-0.55	Feb	22	-89.75
Dec	21	-89.00	Dec	21	22.60	-0.55	May	22	-91.75
Mar	22	-91.00	Mar	22	22.60	-0.55	Aug	22	-93.75
Jun	22	-93.00	Jun	22	22.60	-0.55	Nov	22	-95.75
Sep	22	-95.00	Sep	22	22.60	-0.55	Feb	23	-97.75
Dec	22	-97.00	Dec	22	22.60	-0.55	May	23	-99.75
Mar	23	-99.00	Mar	23	22.60	-0.55	Aug	23	-101.75
Jun	23	-101.00	Jun	23	22.60	-0.55	Nov	23	-103.75
Sep	23	-103.00	Sep	23	22.60	-0.55	Feb	24	-105.75
Dec	23	-105.00	Dec	23	22.60	-0.55	May	24	-107.75
Mar	24	-107.00	Mar	24	22.60	-0.55	Aug	24	-109.75
Jun	24	-109.00	Jun	24	22.60	-0.55	Nov	24	-111.75
Sep	24	-111.00	Sep	24	22.60	-0.55	Feb	25	-113.75
Dec	24	-113.00	Dec	24	22.60	-0.55	May	25	-115.75
Mar	25	-115.00	Mar	25	22.60	-0.55	Aug	25	-117.75
Jun	25	-117.00	Jun	25	22.60	-0.55	Nov	25	-119.75
Sep	25	-119.00	Sep	25	22.60	-0.55	Feb	26	-121.75
Dec	25	-121.00	Dec	25	22.60	-0.55	May	26	-123.75
Mar	26	-123.00	Mar	26	22.60	-0.55	Aug	26	-125.75
Jun	26	-125.00	Jun	26	22.60	-0.55	Nov	26	-127.75
Sep	26	-127.00	Sep	26	22.60	-0.55	Feb	27	-129.75
Dec	26	-129.00	Dec	26	22.60	-0.55	May	27	-131.75
Mar	27	-131.00	Mar	27	22.60	-0.55	Aug	27	-133.75
Jun	27	-133.00	Jun	27	22.60	-0.55	Nov	27	-135.75
Sep	27	-135.00	Sep	27	22.60	-0.55	Feb	28	-137.75
Dec	27	-137.00	Dec	27	22.60	-0.55	May	28	-139.75
Mar	28	-139.00	Mar	28	22.60	-0.55	Aug	28	-141.75
Jun	28	-141.00	Jun	28	22.60	-0.55	Nov	28	-143.75
Sep	28	-143.00	Sep	28	22.60	-0.55	Feb	29	-145.75
Dec	28	-145.00	Dec	28	22.60	-0.55	May	29	-147.75
Mar	29	-147.00	Mar	29	22.60	-0.55	Aug	29	-149.75
Jun	29	-149.00	Jun	29	22.60	-0.55	Nov	29	-151.75
Sep	29	-151.00	Sep	29	22.60	-0.55	Feb	30	-153.75
Dec	29	-153.00	Dec	29	22.60	-0.55	May	30	-155.75
Mar	30	-155.00	Mar	30	22.60	-0.55	Aug	30	-157.75
Jun	30	-157.00	Jun	30	22.60	-0.55	Nov	30	-159.75
Sep	30	-159.00	Sep	30	22.60	-0.55	Feb	31	-161.75
Dec	30	-161.00	Dec	30	22.60	-0.55	May	31	-163.75
Mar	31	-163.00	Mar	31	22.60	-0.55	Aug	31	-165.75
Jun	31	-165.00	Jun	31	22.60	-0.55	Nov	31	-167.75
Sep	31	-167.00	Sep	31	22.60	-0.55	Feb	32	-169.75
Dec	31	-169.00	Dec	31	22.60	-0.55	May	32	-171.75
Mar	32	-171.00	Mar	32	22.60	-0.55	Aug	32	-173.75
Jun	32	-173.00	Jun	32	22.60	-0.55	Nov	32	-175.75
Sep	32	-175.00	Sep	32	22.60	-0.55	Feb	33	-177.75
Dec	32	-177.00	Dec	32	22.60	-0.55	May	33	-179.75
Mar	33	-179.00	Mar	33	22.60	-0.55	Aug	33	-181.75
Jun	33	-181.00	Jun	33	22.60	-0.55	Nov	33	-183.75
Sep	33	-183.00	Sep	33	22.60	-0.55	Feb	34	-185.75
Dec	33	-185.00	Dec	33	22.60	-0.55	May	34	-187.75
Mar	34	-187.00	Mar	34	22.60	-0.55	Aug	34	-189.75
Jun	34	-189.00	Jun	34	22.60	-0.55	Nov	34	-191.75
Sep	34	-191.00	Sep	34	22.60	-0.55	Feb	35	-193.75
Dec	34	-193.00	Dec						

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

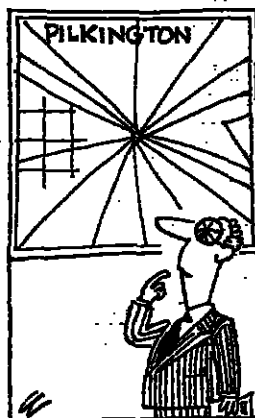
Mistaken identity

A FRONT page apology alone from the *Financial Times* yesterday was not enough to appease the mighty Tiny Rowland. After the *Pink'un* published a story saying incorrectly that the former chief executive of Louth was unfit to preside over a public company, the tycoon demanded an apology as well as a quarter-page advertisement. The error, said by *FT* insiders to have been made by a desk editor rather than the author of the article, was in fact a comment about Robert Maxwell made by the Board of Trade in a report published in the 1970s. Rowland, a former proprietor of *The Observer*, will not claim damages.

Wrong tempo

TEMPO, the electrical retailer, was in trouble yesterday with Chris Tarrant, the Capital FM presenter. The battle was over pre-booked radio advertisements for Tempo featuring the voice of Tarrant's former colleague, Kara Noble, who left the radio station to join Heart 106.2 FM. Numerous listeners have called Capital asking whether Noble has returned. Unhappy Tarrant says that he will put a stop to the advertisements unless Noble's voice-over is changed.

SOUNDS like Pilkington has found success, in one field at least. When the glass manufacturer devised a weatherproof mirror, keepers at Slimbridge Bird Sanctuary, Gloucestershire, seized upon the idea. For flamingoes, I am told, are more likely to mate when surrounded by their feathered friends. So, a bank of the mirrors has been put in the flamingo pit. The results of the aphrodisiac won't show until the summer.



Deal-doer Pirié

AFTER 11 years as chief executive of Rothschild, Robert Pirié has joined Société Générale in New York as vice-chairman in the investment banking division and a senior member of the international mergers and acquisitions group. Having been involved in mergers and acquisitions on behalf of Hanson, Marks & Spencer, and Sir James Goldsmith, Pirié is quite a catch. Stephen Brishby, a member of SocGen's international investment banking committee, describes him as "a fascinating combination of tough Wall Street deal-doer, and someone with an urbane cultured approach to life".

Shellshocked

BODY SHOP International is said to be furious after an invitation was withdrawn because it would have meant sharing a conference platform with Shell. This has not appeared relations between the two companies, which both announced results yesterday. Gavin Grant, public affairs manager at Body Shop, agreed to speak at the conference on Ethical Values in Business Communications on November 20. Then Fifth Estate, the organiser, withdrew the invitation. Apparently Peter Hunt, head of group communication at Shell International, felt uncomfortable at the prospect.

MORAG PRESTON

Kenneth Clarke seems to have put his place in history above the interests of the nation

Why on earth did he do it? For the past two weeks I have devoted this column to the economic damage that a Labour government would do to Britain if it started raising interest rates after the general election and thereby caused another disastrous overshooting of the pound. But, to my surprise, Kenneth Clarke has beaten Labour to it. The damage to manufacturing and investment will begin immediately, rather than after the election, but otherwise there is little to add to the arguments I have put forward in the past two weeks. Instead I want to consider why interest rates are now certain to go on rising — and why an intelligent and previously responsible Chancellor might have chosen to damage the economy in this way.

The political reasons given by most City analysts do not convince me. These reasons were well summarised in a remarkably prescient, though economically misguided, *Lex Column* published in the *Financial Times* on Wednesday a few hours before the Chancellor's unexpected announcement: "None of these [economic] arguments is likely to weigh as heavily on Mr Clarke's mind as electoral politics. Yet the politics does not point one way. A rate rise now would be considerably less painful for the Conservatives than one closer to the election. It could also — irrationally — make the markets more tolerant of an aggressive tax-cutting budget. Who knows? Mr Clarke could yet surprise us."

The reason why these beguiling arguments do not stack up is very clearly illustrated in the article by Tim Congdon, one of the Chancellor's independent economic advisers, on page 20 of today's *Times*. As Mr Congdon states, the quarter-point move in base rates is much too small to have any significant effect on the economy. He suggests that rates would have to be lifted by a further full percentage point, at a minimum, to have any worthwhile impact on inflation.

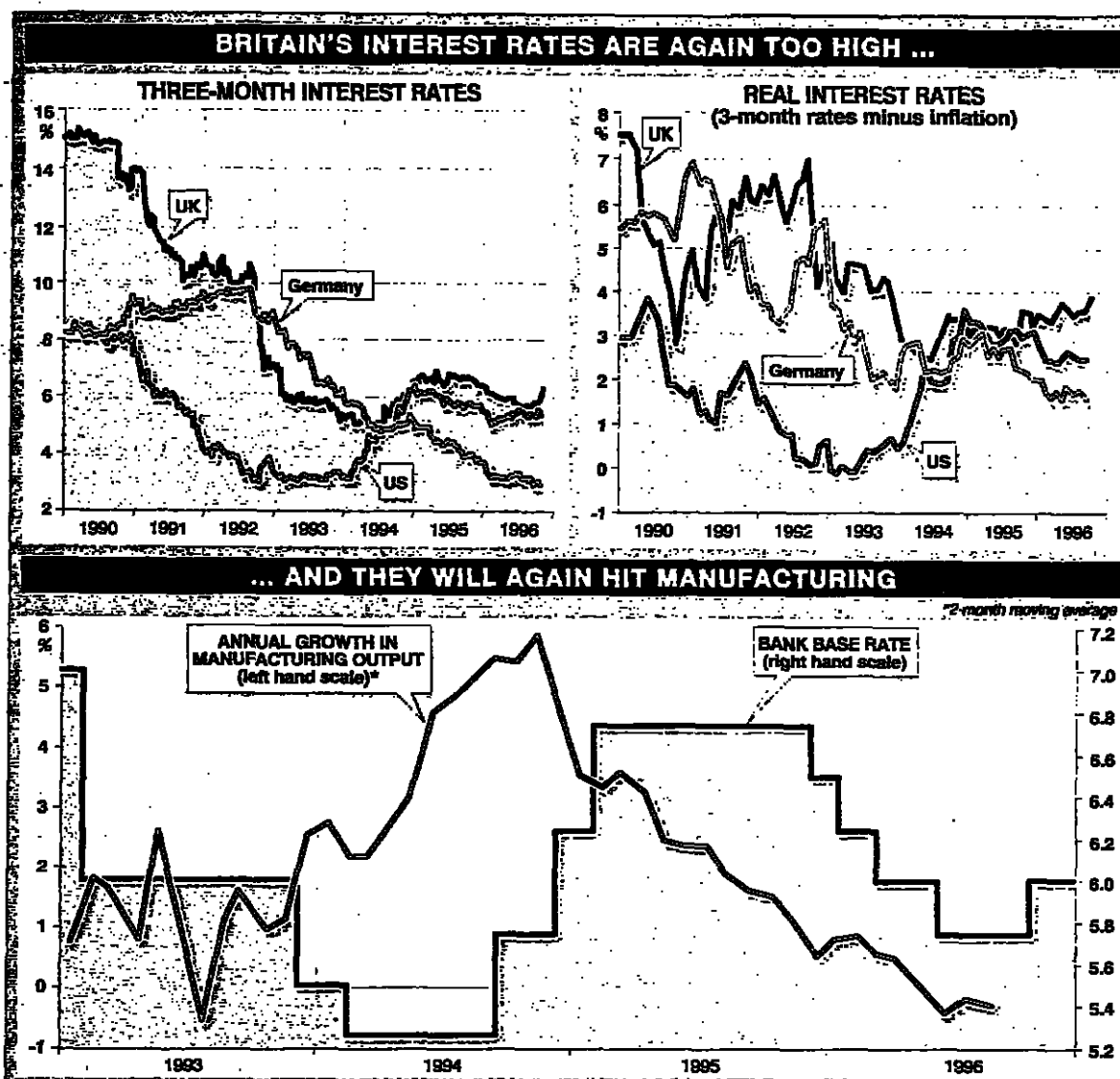
Personally, I disagree with almost every aspect of Mr Congdon's analysis — in particular with his faith in the over-riding importance of the "money supply", which leads him to the strange conclusion that a nation with two million people jobless is on the verge of a boom. But on his prediction of 7 per cent interest rates, I cannot fault him. If Mr Clarke is genuinely worried about inflation, or even if he merely wants to "reassure" the markets about his anti-inflationary resolve, then at least another three or four upward steps in interest rates will be required between now and the election. It is worth recalling that the 1994 round of monetary tightening, which the Chancellor lauded on Wednesday as a paradigm of successful "pre-emptive" action, involved a jump in base rates of 1.5 percentage points in three months. Looking further back over the record of British monetary policy since the 1950s, I have not found a single case of a monetary tightening that involved a rate increase smaller than the 1.25 percentage points now recommended by Mr Congdon.

The likelihood is, therefore, that the



ANATOLE KALETSKY

Why did the Chancellor opt to raise interest rates?



single tiny move announced on Wednesday, far from reassuring the markets about the Government's anti-inflationary resolve and earning Mr Clarke more "tolerance for an aggressive tax-cutting budget", will add to the Treasury's official imprimatur to the opinion of those analysts (like Mr Congdon) who believe that a strongly growing economy will lead inevitably to an inflationary boom. If anything, the markets will now be even more wary about the inflationary implications of an expansionary Budget and will become even more strident in demanding a further rate increase in response to every item of good news on employment, production and growth. I expect to hear complaints from the City about the Chancellor "falling behind the curve" and doing "too little, too late" as soon as a strong economic figure is published later this month.

This pressure is, in fact, already apparent in the market. Short-sterling futures have fallen sharply, anticipating at least one more rate increase before March. Gill-edged securities, have also declined, suggesting that investors have actually become more nervous about inflation.

This was to be expected. Remember the financial markets' favourite slogan: "the trend is your friend". Instead of neutralising the monetary issue until the general election, Mr Clarke's move has whetted the market's appetite for more rate increases by signalling a clear change in the trend of interest rates.

For every economist and leader-

who might be impressed by Mr Clarke's "courageous" move.

Since Mr Clarke has shown himself in the past to be an intelligent Chancellor I cannot believe he was ignorant of the pressures for still-higher interest rates he is now certain to face. To return, then, to where I started: why did he do it?

I think his reasons were profoundly political, but not in the crude electioneering sense generally understood. Mr Clarke knows that he has a better chance of earning an honorable place in history than any other member of the present Government (John Major included). His hopes of doing this depend entirely on avoiding the fate of Nigel Lawson, Tony Barber and Reginald Maudling: he does not want his name to become a mere adjective attached to the word "boom". Whether or not the shares in the alarm expressed by Mr Congdon (and the Bank of England) about the present strength of the economy, Mr Clarke no doubt believes that an unsustainable boom could develop eventually, and that if it did he would be blamed. If, on the other hand, the economy fell back into stagnation and unemployment started rising again after the election, the blame would fall on the next Labour government. From Mr Clarke's point of view, therefore, it may be more attractive to be seen to be taking some action now against inflation, even if inflation is not really a very serious threat.

At this point in the argument we have to factor in the corruption of Britain's political culture by monetarism. The most important of these is the proposition that Government macroeconomic policy is responsible for inflation, but that growth and unemployment are a function of other ill-defined structural forces. The implication of this doctrine is that

politicians can be blamed for failing to control inflation, but not for unemployment and inadequate growth. Contrast this with the situation in Washington, where the Federal Reserve Board explicitly regards its mission as "achieving the highest rate of sustainable growth compatible with price stability", and the reason for America's superior economic performance is crystal clear.

The question that remains is why the Chancellor should be taking out his personal insurance policy against inflation in the way that will do most damage to manufacturing and investment — by raising interest rates and thereby adding to the strength of the pound. I can think of only one possible reason.

The only form of anti-inflation insurance that would be in Britain's national interests — a sharp reduction in the Government deficit — is simply ruled out for political reasons. Mr Clarke's position in the Cabinet may be unassailable when it comes to provocative comments on Europe, but John Major would certainly boot him out of the Treasury if he seriously proposed a Budget that contained a significant cut in core public spending programmes or a large increase in taxes.

Mr Clarke has thus been left with a stark choice. To damage the economy and the Tory's re-election chances by raising interest rates now and continuing to raise them right up to the election — or to risk the loss of his personal reputation in case Mr Congdon and other Cassandras proved right in predicting an unsustainable boom.

Mr Clarke seems to have put his place in history above the interests of the nation. As one of his long-standing admirers, I must admit to being disappointed, but I suppose I should not have been surprised. He is just a politician, after all.

US train model coming down the line in UK

The privatised railways are destined to consolidate, writes Richard Thomson

For a glimpse of what the future may hold, Britain's newly privatised railways should look carefully at what is happening in America. After a decade of seemingly terminal decline, America's railway are celebrating an astonishing recovery with a wave of mergers and consolidation.

The biggest hostile takeover battle is that in which Norfolk Southern and CSX are fighting for control of Conrail, the main rail network of the North East of the US. The bidding is around \$8.5 billion and is likely to go higher yet. The winner will have a company with revenues of around \$14 billion and about 30,000 miles of track.

This is the third big railway deal to take place over the last 12 months. This year, Pacific Rail and Union Pacific merged to form a transport leviathan in the western states, while Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Pacific combined in 1995.

From 31 railway companies in 1980, the number has shrunk to only eight. Four of those control more than 90 per cent of the business — two large companies in the west and

Freight is by far the chief source of income on the US railroads

the less often freight cars have to be shunted into sidings and switched to another company's trains, so claims that a merger with Conrail would save \$350 million a year in costs and add \$200 million to revenues.

Mr Higgins said that privatisation had produced a better interplay between cost and service, and growth in revenue and profits. "It's a win-win situation. In the past the British Government used the freight side of the business to subsidise the passenger side."

Freight is now a priority on US railroads and by far the chief source of income. Britain's railway operators have certain advantages: growing congestion on the roads and the change in the political climate against new road building, while trucking costs are likely to rise.

The process produces its own logic. Once the privatised rail companies have found their feet in Britain, US-style consolidation seems almost inevitable.

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New law would offer building societies greater flexibility

From the Chairman of the Building Societies Association, Sir, In his desire to promote wider share ownership, Mr John Marshall's questioning of the need for a Building Societies Bill (Business Letters, October 25) widely misses the mark.

First, any future new legislation is very unlikely to prevent any society that wishes to do so from converting to plc status, with the consent of its members. More importantly, his implication that plc status would promote greater efficiency is highly questionable. Even using a traditional plc cost-to-income ratio measure of efficiency, building societies have significantly outperformed the quoted banks in the past.

Finally, the people that really count — customers — would find Mr Marshall's implication that they would somehow benefit from greater competition if building societies were to disappear very surprising. Quite the reverse is true, with building societies providing strong competition to the banks on the high street, promoting home ownership and offering consumers excellent value products and services. The proposed new legislation would play an important role in offering societies the greatest possible flexibility

to respond to customers' changing needs over the long term.

Yours faithfully, BRIAN DAVIS, Chairman, Building Societies Association, 3 Savile Row, W1

Ownership myth

From Mr Jim French, Sir, Prior knowledge that the Building Societies Bill was to be dropped from the Queen's Speech could well account for the pussy-footing replies the Building Societies' Members' Association has received from the Building Societies Association and the Treasury lately.

It is not the societies that deserve more freedom and protection — it is the investors and borrowers. The Bill consultation document called for a code of conduct for societies. The BSA indicated it would not bring all points in the suggested code and the Treasury appeared disinclined to persuade the societies to bring in such a code.

It has often been stated that the societies, which pay billions of pounds a year in tax on their profits, wanted a clearer definition of the "two-year" rule on cash bonuses or share distributions. The an-

swer has always been in their own hands: they should not seek to bribe members to accept changes of status that will make some directors and chief executives millionaires.

The bribes come from reserves built up over the years from investors' lending and from charges made to borrowers. They bred the carpet-baggers.

Millions of us are supposed to own the societies. This is a myth. Members have no more power than shareholders — moreover, the societies are doing their best to persuade us we would be better off as shareholders.

There is this difference, though. Whereas societies are "owned" entirely by members, institutions such as insurance companies, pension funds and unit trusts are dominant shareholders in plcs, which also sometimes attract foreign investment. These factors could be a deterrent from your forecast that more (previously uncommitted or against) societies will opt for flotation.

Yours faithfully, JIM FRENCH, (Building Societies' Members' Association), 3 Dell Lane, Billingshurst, West Sussex.

Age discrimination not solely based on cost but on false assumptions

From Mr Richard Worsley

Sir, Pennington (October 22) over-simplifies age discrimination in suggesting that it merely reflects the price of older workers. There are thousands of older people who do not want to be paid any more than younger employees, who are ready and willing to work,

but who are excluded from doing so simply because of assumptions and stereotypes based on their age. Yours faithfully, RICHARD WORSLEY, The Carnegie Third Age Programme, PO Box 160, Burnham Norton, Kings Lynn, Norfolk.

Cedrician computer inflates the Gas bill

From Mr T.S. Mills

Sir, British Gas have just informed me that my monthly payments for the past year fell short of the amount due by £36.

To adjust this they propose to increase my monthly payments by £12 per month. They express their estimate thus: "Total £672.22 divided by 12 equals £56.02."

This must have been done on the computer which worked out Cedric Brown's salary and bonuses. Yours faithfully, T.S. MILLS, 7 Seaburn Close, Sunderland.

Goldfish in deep water

From Annabel Geddes

Sir, Regarding the new Goldfish card (Olgas investigates the Goldfish card, October 24), my part-time gardener, surviving on social security benefits through lack of local work, has twice been sent the particulars of the card.

We have goldfish in our pond, but no gas in the village. Could the address lists have got mixed up? I fear they will sink, not swim. Yours faithfully, ANNABEL GEDDES, Gaston Manor, Tisbury, Wiltshire.

Brake on profits at Tandem Group

By CLARE STEWART

TANDEM GROUP, Britain's second largest bicycle-maker, made slow progress in the first half of the year, held back by losses from the sale of its clothing operations.

Tandem, which makes well known names such as British Eagle, Claud Butler and Falcon, incurred a pre-tax loss of £3.5 million in the six months to July 28, compared with a profit of £2.11 million.

Robin Garland, chief executive, said: "Whilst these results are disappointing, the figures include £2.4 million relating to the disposal and closure of our clothing operations."

Tandem, which was formed a year ago with the merger of Casket, the cycle-maker, and EFG, a former horticulture business, is not paying an interim dividend.

The group, having sold off its clothing interests, said that there would be no further restructuring costs to come. Although it had taken longer than expected to get the group into shape, Tandem was now on track as a focused cycle business, Mr Garland said.

In total, the cycle operations showed a profit of £17,000 in the first half, largely because of the strengths of the Falcon and Claud Butler brands. In its Townsend division, which includes the British Eagle and cycle accessories business, Tandem expects that cost savings and lower overheads at its large manufacturing plant at Leigh, Lancashire, will boost profitability.

Tandem has about 28 per cent of the UK market and the group said, the outlook was bright, helped by moves such as the recent Department of Transport initiative to increase cycle use.

Tandem is also looking overseas, capitalising on its strengths as a large volume producer to supply markets in Europe where demand is high.

Nick Barram, an analyst at Greig Middleton, the broker, expects the group to move back into profit in 1997-98, and identifies considerable potential for the group if it is able to expand its core business in the UK and Europe. Shares in Tandem moved 4p higher to 104p.



Food for all seasons: the Dutch deal should allow Perkins to extend the market for its off-season imports, Howard Phillips, chief executive, says

Perkins rights to fund £15m Dutch purchase

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

PERKINS FOODS is expanding its fresh produce division through the £15.6 million acquisition of Disselkoen Group, one of the largest exporters of fresh fruit, vegetables and flowers in The Netherlands.

To finance the purchase, the company is to raise £15.5 million through a one-for-six rights issue at 74p per share. The net proceeds of the rights issue will provide £8.7 million cash, while the balance of £6.9 million will be paid to Disselkoen's owners with 8.13 million new ordinary shares.

Vincent Disselkoen, owner of 80 per cent of the company's shares, died last summer. His widow and the company's managers, owners of the remaining 20 per cent of shares, took the decision to sell. Howard Phillips, chief executive of Perkins Foods, said that Disselkoen's management will remain with the company under the new ownership.

Perkins fresh produce divi-

sion imports off-season produce that it sells mainly to supermarkets in The Netherlands. The addition of Disselkoen, which sells produce grown in Dutch glass houses to the rest of Europe, should allow Perkins to extend the market for its off-season imports, Mr Phillips said.

The acquisition and rights issue are expected to have a neutral impact on 1997 earnings per share.

The company believes that in the first full year, after acquisition, profitability of its fresh food division will be improved.

In the year ended December 31, Disselkoen made a pre-tax profit of £2.64 million on turnover of £185.5 million. The amount Perkins Foods will pay for the Dutch company is dependent on Disselkoen's profits this year being at least £3.1 million.

In the event of a shortfall, Perkins would pay less under the terms of the agreement.

Body Shop offsets US loss with sales growth in Asia

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

A STRONG performance in Asia offset another poor American showing and helped Body Shop to a 30 per cent leap in profits in the first half.

The company yesterday reported a pre-tax profit of £11.8 million for the six months to August 31, compared with £9.1 million a year ago.

The interim dividend has been raised 39 per cent to 1.5p, ahead of earnings per share which increased 29 per cent to 3.6p. This is in line with the Body Shop's policy — adopted after it abandoned hopes earlier this year of returning to private ownership — of bringing its dividend yield closer to the sector average.

The interim dividend is payable on January 9. Total

retail sales grew 13 per cent but comparable store sales rose just 1 per cent. They were up 8 per cent in Asia, 5 per cent in Australasia and 1 per cent in the UK and Europe.

But in the United States they fell 5 per cent. The USA incurred an operating loss of £3.4 million, compared with a £2.4 million loss a year ago, while the UK's operating profit was flat at £2.9 million. Asia, by contrast, produced an operating profit of £6.5 million, up from £4.5 million.

In the first month after the end of the first half, total retail sales are 11 per cent ahead, but like-for-like sales are flat. In the UK in the past two months, like-for-like sales have slipped 2 per cent.

Gordon Roddick, chairman, who founded the business with his wife, Anita, chief executive, said that Asia "con-



Roddick: profits advance

tinues to be a dynamic expansion area".

The company has opened its first two stores in the Philippines and is set to open its first outlet in Korea in the next few months. Around half of the 63 new stores opened worldwide during the first half are in Asia.

In the whole of this year, around 125 stores will be opened, taking the total to around 1,500.

Mr Roddick said that turning round the struggling American business "was always going to be a long job. We have had a terrific assault from our competitors. But the trend is not worsening: like-for-likes were down 8 per cent a year ago".

The company appointed a new head of the US business, Steen Kanter, in September. Mr Roddick said he was confident that Mr Kanter would make a difference: "You will see some changes there in the spring. It is the first time we've had the US business run by a retailer."

Mr Kanter previously worked for Ikea, the Swedish furniture retailer, and Lechters, a US housewares retailer.

Four new UK stores are planned by the end of this financial year, after only one was opened in the first half.

Its shares closed 4½p higher at 200p.

Temps, page 28

Lukewarm reception to Deep Sea's AIM debut

By FRASER NELSON

DEEP SEA LEISURE, which runs Britain's largest aquarium, experienced a lukewarm reception to its debut on the Alternative Investment Market yesterday.

Its shares were placed at 160p, valuing the company at £10 million. Although none changed hands yesterday, they closed 2½p easier at 157½p.

The company, whose centre in Fife was recently named Scotland's best new tourist attraction of the decade, has raised £3.5 million from the flotation, which it will use towards opening a second centre in Cheshire.

Phil Crane, its founder and managing director, becomes a paper millionaire through the placing, with his 23½ per cent stake now valued at £2.31 million.

He set up Deep Sea World in 1992, after winning a £250,000 grant from Fife Enterprise and putting up £800,000 of his own money.

The centre has since become Scotland's third most popular tourist attraction, behind Edinburgh Castle and Edinburgh Zoo, drawing 400,000 visitors every year. Williams de Broé were the advisers on the placing.

Medeva survives Hepagene challenge

By OUR CITY STAFF

BIAGEN UK yesterday lost its challenge to the patent for Hepagene, the hepatitis B drug developed by Medeva, the international pharmaceuticals company. The House of Lords dismissed Biogen's appeal, with costs, and upheld the Court of Appeal decision that Biogen's patent 0182442 is invalid in the United Kingdom.

Medeva said that the judgment is the final verdict in this case, against which Biogen has no further appeal. William Bogie, Medeva's chief executive, said: "We have always believed that our case was strong. It was upheld in the Court of Appeal and has now been finally resolved in our favour once and for all in the House of Lords."

Dr Bogie said that Phase II clinical data has indicated that Hepagene has proven clinical superiority "and we believe it offers to help meet a serious unmet medical need in the community".

Phase II dose-range clinical trials concluded in 1995, indicated that Hepagene has highly immunogenic properties and is effective for people who do not respond adequately to existing vaccines against hepatitis B.

Premier Oil raises bid for Discovery

By OUR CITY STAFF

Premier Oil, the UK oil exploration and production company, has increased its hostile takeover bid for Discovery Petroleum of Australia to A\$106.5 million (about £52 million) from A\$91.1 million.

The UK company said the new offer, which is worth 80 cents a share, was unlikely to be further increased. The original offer of 70 cents a share was quickly rejected by the Discovery board.

The revised terms were tabled after Steve Lowden, who is international manager of Premier Oil, met executives from Discovery in Perth to discuss the Australian company's production and exploration portfolio.

Mr Lowden, who returns to London today, said he planned to discuss the revised offer with Discovery executives in the near

future. "This is the bid at the moment that we can justify, based upon our recent evaluation," he said. "I can't see us getting access to any more data."

Discovery shares traded at 52 cents before Premier announced its initial offer. While a report prepared by Grant Samuel and Associates and commissioned by Discovery valued the shares at between 77 cents and 95 cents, Mr Lowden said the upper end of the range was optimistic, especially with the Australian exploration acreage.

Oil Search, an oil production and exploration company based in Papua New Guinea, purchased a 10.1 per cent stake in Discovery after the initial Premier bid. Mr Lowden said he had not discussed the bid with Oil Search but had met the company recently to discuss regional operations.

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Equities enjoy modest rally

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1996 Low Company Price % Chg % PE	1996 Low Company Price % Chg % PE	1996 Low Company Price % Chg % PE	1996 Low Company Price % Chg % PE
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES			
120 120 120 120	120 120 120 120	120 120 120 120	120 120 120 120
BANKS			
120 120 120 120	120 120 120 120	120 120 120 120	120 120 120 120
BREWERIES, PUBS & REST			
120 120 120 120	120 120 120 120	120 120 120 120	120 120 120 120
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			
120 120 120 120	120 120 120 120	120 120 120 120	120 120 120 120
ENGINEERING, VEHICLES			
120 120 120 120	120 120 120 120	120 120 120 120	120 120 120 120
FOOD MANUFACTURERS			
120 120 120 120	120 120 120 120	120 120 120 120	120 120 120 120
HEALTHCARE			
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Revenues from oil and gas reach a six-year high

By OUR BUSINESS STAFF

SOARING oil prices combined with a further rise in Britain's buoyant crude production to boost the value of oil and gas revenues to a six-year high in September.

Gas output also rose in September, according to Royal Bank of Scotland's monthly oil and gas index, increasing Britain's combined daily oil and gas revenues to £47 million, an increase of 25.3 per cent on year.

The advance represents good news for the UK oil industry and the balance of payments. However, it may not be welcomed by motorists, who seem certain to have to pay more for petrol over the next few weeks.

Stephen Boyle, head of business economics at the Royal Bank, said: "Oil stocks are considerably lower than in the last two years and leave prices vulnerable to sharp increases in demand if the winter weather is severe. It appears

unlikely that prices will fall much from their present level until next year and even then the position of Iraqi exports presents a major source of uncertainty."

The rise in the price of benchmark crude to \$22.49 took it to its highest level since the Gulf War. The increase was largely down to the suspension of an agreement between Iraq and the UN that would have allowed Iraq to resume limited oil exports.

Mr Boyle said that this had been compounded by evidence of higher world oil demand in 1996 and the reduction in stock levels.

Oil production in September rose 7.2 per cent to an average daily level of 2.5 million barrels, while gas output increased 30 per cent, ending six successive months of decline reflecting more demand from gas-fired power stations.

Combined daily oil and gas

revenues grew strongly in September, rising by more than £7 million to average £47 million. Revenues were 25.3 per cent higher than in September 1995. Average sterling oil revenues were £36.1 million per day, a rise of 16.8 per cent on the month. Gas revenues rose to £10.9 million a day.

The combination of continued high prices and further increases in output mean that revenues in 1996 will be significantly higher than in 1995. In London, oil traded at \$23.80 a barrel yesterday, having peaked at \$25.18 in early October. Prices are being driven partly by low oil stocks.

Figures from the American Petroleum Institute show distillate stocks, which include heating oil, at 110 million barrels, considerably lower than in the two previous years when they measured about 130 million to 140 million barrels in the run-up to winter.



Tony Mack plans to set up another overseas subsidiary

Air charter firm heads higher

By KERRY RODGERS

AIR London International, the air charter broker, surprised the City yesterday by announcing a special 10p dividend after reporting a 104 per cent leap in full-year profits.

Pre-tax profits rose to £2.19 million, from £1.07 million, for the year to July 31 on turnover up 20 per cent to £35 million.

After a final dividend of 4.1p per share, net dividend for the year was up 50 per cent to 6p, payable on December 18. The further 10p per share special dividend will be paid at the same time, reflecting a 20 per cent increase in cash balances to £7.06 million.

The company's commercial aircraft division, which charters airlines for special events, saw a 20 per cent rise in sales.

Turnover at Air Partner International, the Paris based subsidiary in which the company now has a 55 per cent stake, increased two-and-a-half times. The company plans to set up another overseas subsidiary, probably in Germany or Italy.

Tony Mack, chairman, also indicated that the group would look to set up in America in the long term.

Dresdner advances despite income fall

DRESDNER BANK, the German commercial bank that owns Kleinwort Benson, reported a 29.7 per cent rise in nine-month profits, despite a surprising drop in trading income, and stuck to its forecast for a solid double-digit rise in full-year earnings. Dresdner said operating profits rose to DM1.89 billion, broadly in line with analysts' forecasts but marking a slowdown from the 44 per cent growth at the half-year stage. There was a 14.8 per cent decline in own-account trading profits to DM456.2 million, especially after Dresdner showed trading earnings of DM382 million in the first half. Net commission income rose 42 per cent to DM2.8 billion, largely boosted by the integration of Kleinwort Benson.

Dresdner announced plans to launch a direct banking unit in the second half of 1997 and said it expected its commissions from the Deutsche Telekom issue to be in the double-digit millions of marks in the fourth quarter. Dresdner is one of the three global co-ordinators for the flotation.

Publisher to cut staff

SOUTHERN NEWSPAPERS, whose publications include the *Southern Daily Echo* and the *Bournemouth Evening Echo*, is to shed up to 200 jobs, or 15 per cent of its workforce, over the next two years to reduce costs. The job cuts include 30 voluntary redundancies already agreed with staff at Southampton, Bournemouth and Basingstoke in Hampshire as a result of the company moving its central region publishing operation from the centre of Southampton to a £35 million publishing and printing centre on the outskirts of the city. Last month the group reported a 62 per cent rise in pre-tax profit to £18.8 million in the year to June 29.

GPG withdraws offer

SHARES of Gowings, the automotive distributor and Burger King franchisee, fell 8½p to 76½p yesterday after Guinness Peat Group, the investment firm, said that it would not be proceeding with an offer after failing to secure a recommendation from the Gowings board. Early last month Guinness Peat indicated that it was prepared to make a cash offer of not less than 90p a share. Guinness Peat is the largest shareholder in Gowings. GPG said it "remains convinced that Gowings' prospects are limited by the modest scale of its disparate businesses and that it would benefit from being part of a larger group".

Eurotherm in US buy

EUROTHERM, the specialist engineering company based in Sussex, yesterday announced the \$112 million purchase of Viatran Corporation of Grand Island, New York. Viatran, with annual sales of about \$11 million, specialises in the design and manufacture of electro-mechanical pressure transducers that are widely used in the industrial and process control markets. Eurotherm said that Viatran would be able to strengthen its development capabilities and its worldwide distribution channels after the acquisition. Eurotherm shares fell 3½p to 61½p yesterday.

Toyo jobs for Wales

WALES is welcoming its 51st Japanese manufacturing company today as Toyo Seal Industries announces a £2.4 million project at Wrexham, north Wales. This is Toyo's first investment outside Japan, and will result in the creation of 40 jobs. Osaka-based Toyo, which was established in 1928, produces rubber seals for use in the automotive industry. It employs 700 people in Japan. Toyo will move to a 25,000 sq ft factory at Wrexham, owned by the Welsh Development Agency, from where it will service customers throughout the UK.

Bertam profits soar

BERTAM Holdings, the oil palm and rubber plantations company that operates in Malaysia, reported pre-tax profits of £15.39 million for the half-year to the end of June, including a £12.88 million surplus from the sale of a 997-hectare land sale. Profits were £1.05 million in the first half of the previous year. Operating profits were £2.08 million, rising from £758,000 previously. Earnings were 65.70p a share, compared with 3.16p. There is again no interim dividend but a special dividend of 4p a share was paid on July 24.

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صباح الخير

THEATRE 1

A tale of two daddies: contrasting productions of Beckett's *Happy Days* in Paris and London

THEATRE 2

Ovid is all jokes in an updating of *The Metamorphoses* at the Battersea Arts Centre

THE TIMES ARTS

THEATRE 3

A controversial success in Dublin, but *The Gay Detective* seems out of touch in Kilburn

MUSIC

At the Barbican Riccardo Chailly gets to grips with Mahler's shattering Tenth Symphony

THEATRE: A Beckett classic staged in London and Paris; updated Ovid; and a controversial Irish play in Kilburn

Going down in style

If Samuel Beckett pic needed a trademark it might choose the image of two tramps waiting — in reference to his first, most famous play. But other writers have written about tramps; even Anthony Newley has done it. Only one man has put on stage a woman "stuck up to her daddies in the bleeding ground" and kept her there, unable to shift, for the greater part of two hours.

For the last quarter of that time she has sunk in further, up to her neck, but still she goes through her repertoire of smiles and reproaches, yapping on to fill the hours between the bell that rings to wake her up and will ring again to announce the time to sleep.

Like Vladimir, Estragon and other Beckett characters, Winnie is trapped in the foetid enigma of life. She has found ways to kill time, but time refuses to stay dead, so that next day she is in the same place but worse off than before. It is *Groundhog Day* in hell.

Karel Reisz's production from Dublin's Gate Theatre is at the Almeida till the end of next week. Stuck up to her daddies, and then to her neck, in a mound of orange sand is Rosaleen Linehan, the splendid actress who was over here six years ago at the National, when she was dancing at Lughnasa. Barry McGovern plays Willie, presumably her husband, occasionally clambering into view to read not titbits from *Reynolds News* before retiring to masturbate quietly behind the mound. He wears a Battle of Britain moustache as bushy as Beckett's stage directions demand, but his bald wig is a joke.

Even before the play begins something remarkable is in place: a never-before-seen curtain across the front of the Almeida stage. The practical purpose of this is to enable the actress to be inserted into the

mound out of sight of the audience. You might suppose this or some shuffling around in a blackout are the only ways to start the play.

But ten days ago I discovered an alternative at Peter Brook's Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord in Paris where his production of *Oh les beaux jours* — the French version of the play — is currently running. He later explained that his proscenium arch is so high that a curtain looked foolish, and he had asked his actress, Natasha Parry, if she felt able to take her place in the mound while the audience watched.

So we saw her, escorted to the surprisingly grassy lump in the middle of the stage and wriggle inside while a slab of turf was fitted behind her. Demonstrating the illusion of theatre, a very Brook solution, and the play's quality is diminished not a scrap.

There seem to be fewer laughs in the French text. At the Almeida they come in abundance during the first part but laughter dies after the interval as we gaze at Linehan's disembodied head, only her mouth and eyes moving, see the terror in her stare, hear the tremor of panic in her voice.

Earlier, while she still had arms to help her through the motions of elegant deportment, Linehan brings a touchingly absurd hauteur to Winnie's self-satisfactions, and also a lofty smile with something of a sneer as it. Now, what she has only her eyes to act with, the fearful irony of her sentimental bleats of thanks for mental received — "Oh this will have been a happy day" — generate in the observer a kind of frustrated pity.

From time to time my attention wandered away, as it also did in Paris, but I suppose this is exactly what Beckett, old leaser that he was, intended.

JEREMY KINGSTON

Happy Days Almeida, NI



Barry McGovern and Rosaleen Linehan, "trapped in the foetid enigma of life" in Karel Reisz's production of *Happy Days*, now at the Almeida

Some sterling notes in all the louche change

YOU would expect a show based on Ovid called *The Metamorphoses* and performed by a physical-musical theatre company to be full of magical transformations: women into trees, gods into rays of sunlight and so on. To some extent the Clod Ensemble disappoints in this regard, with the notable exception of the discourteous Lycian peasants, who are most enjoyably turned into frogs. Instead, the ensemble, recipients of the 1996 Christopher Whelan Award for musical theatre, has given us a jokey, contemporary slant on the gods and their amorous bickering.

The high priestess Juno is reduced to a spiteful, jealous wife. When her husband Jupiter is confronted with

the fact that his brother Pluto has carried Proserpine off into the Underworld, he simply retorts: "Yeah. So what of it?" Humour which relies on shock value like this is effective, but can lose its edge from overuse.

All these mythical tales unfold on a circle of sand (designed by Sarah Blenkinsop), while a septet of musicians accompanies, and sometimes dictates, the action with Paul Clark's original compositions. Nine performers dance, mime and sometimes sing stories, freely interchanging roles for each one.

At worst, this is uncomfortably

The Metamorphoses BAC, SW1

reminiscent of those music and movement classes they made us do at primary school, with everyone emoting like mad. At best,

though, an atmosphere and an emotion is genuinely conjured — such as when Hecate rises from her cave and tries to prevent Proserpine's abduction, or when Apollo's chariot out of control in Apollo's chariot.

There is no doubt that the Ensemble is a talented bunch of performers — their work is slickly presented and they are attempting a refreshing reinvention of the interplay between music and action on stage. Their chosen performance style is intention-

ally mannered, as befits their arch and self-referential approach. At times this slips over into self-consciousness, and you long for them all to stop acting so ostentatiously.

If they could broaden their emotional repertoire the sense would be dispelled that their work erts on the side of the inconsequential. And all the better if this could be achieved without losing their characteristic charm. Like the unforgettable moment when Juno, annoyed that one of the violinists has seduced Jupiter with her virtuoso playing, takes a brutal revenge by snipping all the violin's strings with wire-cutters.

CLARE BAYLEY

mean streets like the hero of a Raymond Chandler novel. A government minister needs to be protected; a drug dealer needs to be collared. Hardly is our bound on the set when he falls in love with a victim of a vicious queer-bashing incident. When a politician is found murdered outside a homosexual sauna, Pat finds himself on the dangerous fringe of a political scandal involving several well-insulated public figures.

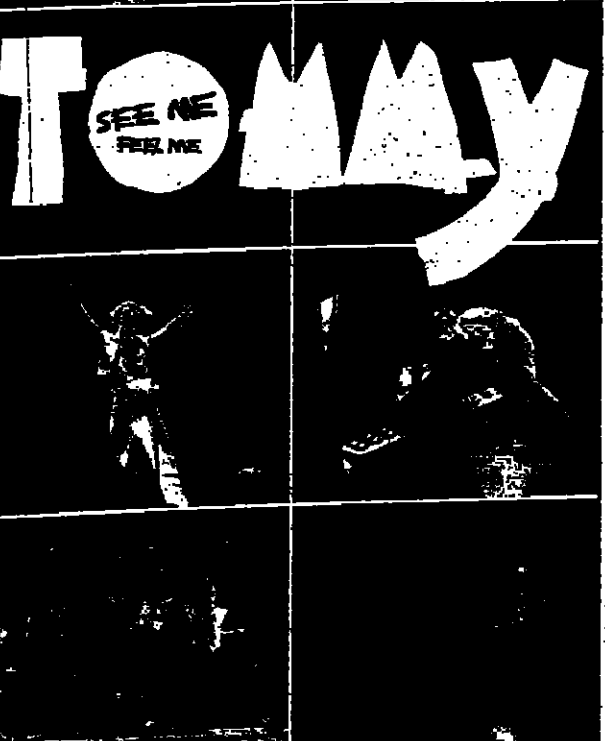
Stembridge seems to be making a point by depicting a thriving, well-established gay community. But for all the graphic scenes of men having sex with men, its dramatic scenario is decidedly weak. Beyond the love story, woefully manipulated by the sudden revelation that his lover Ginger is HIV positive, the play is little more than a series of sketchy diversions in which we see the predictable disintegration of Pat's enthusiasm and integrity.

Hardly makes a decent fist of

Pat, touchingly enthralled to Eddie Tighe's nicely understated Ginger, but every other character is a two-dimensional stereotype. Middle-aged men are either malevolent rapists of young rent boys or miming closet queens: the young are uniformly exploited. Perhaps Stembridge's hard point is that this is what legislation against homosexuality has produced in Ireland. If it is, it feels distinctly out of touch in Kilburn.

JAMES CHRISTOPHER

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LONDON CONCERTS: Stunning Mahler; idiomatic Dvořák

Epic way to say goodbye

LSO/Chailly
Barbican

THERE could hardly have been a finer tribute to the late Berthold Goldschmidt than the London Symphony Orchestra's performance, dedicated to his memory, of Mahler's Symphony No 10. Goldschmidt had been a vital collaborator in the performing version of Mahler's final symphony prepared by Deryck Cooke, and first performed in its entirety by Goldschmidt and the LSO in 1964.

Riccardo Chailly's performance made the work seem as rich and as strange as it must always remain. The LSO had played themselves in with Britten's *Sinfonia da Requiem*: it showed the first signs of a supplest of ensemble and a fine balance of detail and long-sighted vision which was to characterise the Mahler.

Chailly's skill throughout was to sharp-focus the individual moment and yet to sense its place in the highly-strung nervous system of the whole. The violas' long, desolate opening melody was moulded like wet clay, yet as soon as it was fired into focused tonality by the strings, Chailly moved the music on robustly. As solo voices and masks were uncovered, vibrato and attack were intense: Chailly's body seemed at times charged with static electricity.

For the first Scherzo, a keen balance of wind and strings made for an acerbic quality of dislocation. The second Scherzo ("the Devil dances with me", wrote Mahler) was heady with razor-edge chording and lines drawn out to breaking point. In between, the Purgatorio movement had

seemed a dry, hollow echo of human song itself.

Chailly's command of the long finale, with its numb offstage drum-strokes, was mastery. As pitch gradually faded into bare rhythm, only to rise again into the light, the LSO responded warmly both to Chailly's imaginative vision and to his sensitive physical pacing of Mahler's passionate *anvil* to the world.

HILARY FINCH

Troubles forgotten

Czech PO/Pesek
Festival Hall

WHATEVER its recent vicissitudes, with conductors, the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra was in good heart and superior form to start a short tour in England in its centenary year. Its visit is at the instigation of the Royal Philharmonic Society here, which made Dvořák an honorary member in his time and commissioned from him the Seventh Symphony with which this programme began. Libor Pesek, a former resident conductor of this leading Czech orchestra, has a wonderful rapport with these players. That was evident in their alertness to his every nuance of phrasing in music which is often ominously dark in its

colouring yet never fails to uplift the listener. Pesek is not a conductor to linger, even when the musical mood invites it. He gave the slow movement unusual fervour and ended with a whirl of jubilation.

One could enjoy much instrumental distinction within the orchestra's ranks, surprisingly still all male apart from the two harpists. In particular the leader (whom I took to be Bohumil Kotmel) contributed violin solos of fluent delicacy.

The richest sonorities were saved for Janáček's colourful rhapsody *Taras Bulba*, to end the programme. In between, Mikhail Pletnev stepped out as a piano soloist of exemplary clarity and flexibility in Beethoven's First Concerto. A welcome tenderness infused the middle movement, and the subtle gradations of tone in the finale compensated for smoothing the syncopations too much.

NOEL GOODWIN

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RIMSKY-KORSAKOV Russian Easter Overture

PROKOFIEV Piano Concerto No 3

SHOSTAKOVICH Symphony No 5 in D minor

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66 Highly theoretical moral philosophy is abstract and falsified. Its theories tend to be artificial academic constructs, very little to do with how people live their lives. 99

John Davies on Bernard Williams

WHERE BILL CLINTON AND MORALS COME TOGETHER.

66 The President has a sexual harassment charge awaiting him when he finally leaves office, and the Whitewater scandal has seen former associates goaded and suggestions that Hillary Clinton may be indicted. 99

How Richards on the US election

The US election heats up, Bernard Williams discusses life after White's Professorship of Moral Philosophy, Archie Brown interviews Mikhail Gorbachev and Lisa Jardine uncovers an Elizabethan recipe. Read Perspectives, this week in The Times Higher Education Supplement.

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POP 2
Spice Girls successfully transfer their brand of froth and attitude to a new album



POP 3
... while the President of the USA return with a mixture of oddball humour and romping rock

THE TIMES POP ARTS



POP 4
With a little help from his friends: Babyface musters starry backing for *The Day*



POP 5
... but the eerie industrial album from The Future Sound of London is only for diehard fans

Wannabe in their gang? Oh, yeah

POP ALBUMS: Spice Girls follow up two smash hit singles with a debut LP that has David Sinclair joining their fan club

SPICE GIRLS
Spice (Virgin 7243 8 42174)
THE editor of *Smash Hits* called them "Oasis with a Wonderbra", and she could be right. For while Oasis have forged mainstream pop from the crucible of "serious" rock'n'roll, Spice Girls are travelling in the opposite direction, taking a pure pop formula and giving it a surprisingly credible edge. Their reward may well be success, and possibly even respect, in a scale to rival that of Oasis.

It is tempting to dismiss *Spice* on first hearing as just another frothy concoction for the kids. Like all good pop it has an air of energetic frivolity, and more bounce than a pinball. But you do not have to be a re-pubescent girl to appreciate the genuine sense of resolve that runs like a thin thread of steel through the ten tracks.

Unlike predecessors such as Bananarama, the Girls are more of a gang than a group, a development which entails a fundamental shift in the emotional priorities of their songs. "God help the mister that comes between me and my sisters" is the message of *Love Thing*, echoing the girl power/solidarity theme of their massive worldwide hit, *Wannabe*.

Peppered with slogans such as "I'm choosy, not a floozy", the album has a constantly assertive ring about it, yet always favouring guile and wit above aggression. And on *Naked*, a slow song full of sexual tension, in which a voice on a telephone insists "I'd rather be hated than pitied", they hint at a depth of feeling that goes well beyond the superficial charm of additional teen-pop.

THE PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
II (Columbia)

FROM ZZ Top to the Ramones, America has sustained a long line of cartoon bands that can really rock. Successfully defending their status as the grunge incumbents of this noble tradition, the Seattle-based Presidents of the United States of America return with a second album which combines relaxed, oddball humour with lots of lean but muscular riffing.

Ladies and Gentlemen I simultaneously punctures and celebrates the romantic myth of rock'n'roll: "Good evening ladies and gentlemen/Are you prepared to rock?/This is the show, we are the band/Sometimes it just takes you by the hand."

What follows is a good-natured romp through songs about racing cars (*Machine 5, Bug City*), girls (*Supermodel, L.I.P.*) and the thrill of rocking out (*Tube Amplifier, Volcano*). Genghis Khan, Darth Vader and Mick Jagger all get a namecheck along the way and, while the band's knockabout approach tends to work better on stage or with video accompaniment, their absurdist tendencies are sufficiently held in check not to diminish the impact of the music on a more basic level.

THE FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON
Dead Cities (Virgin 7243 8 42231)

ALTHOUGH *Dead Cities* is a more structured effort than the Future Sound of London's most successful album, *Lifeforms*, re-



So they "hint at a depth of feeling that goes well beyond the superficial charm of traditional teen-pop". do they? And you thought that all Spice Girls wanted to do is have fun

leased in 1994, it is still a mysterious and highly impressionistic piece of work.

The musical architecture erected by the duo of Garry Cobain and Brian Dougans is an unpredictable tangle of industrial sounds, trip hop drum-machine beats, ethereal chorales, buzzy synthesizer effects and gentle piano interludes.

The result, as confirmed by the album's artwork, is an eerie, if

rather familiar, sci-fi vision of the city as a scarred, sprawling organism, ripe for takeover by alien beings: *X-Files* meets *War of the Worlds* in glorious, ambient-techno sound.

BABYFACE
The Day (Epic 485368)

HE MAY be one of the most successful American artists of the

decade, but curiously, Babyface has never placed an album of his own in the British chart. Still, as the writer and producer of a slew of international hits for acts including Whitney Houston, Boyz II Men, Toni Braxton, Celine Dion and Madonna, the bulge of his address book is second only to that of Quincy Jones.

He calls in a few favours on *The Day*, recruiting Mariah Carey to

sing backing vocals on *Every Time I Close My Eyes*. Stevie Wonder to co-write and play harmonica on *How Come*. How Long and Eric Clapton to add discreet touches of blues guitar on *Talk to Me*.

But their presence is merely the icing on the cake, and the enterprise is very much dominated by the supremely stylish presence of Babyface himself. A latterday crooner with an impressive com-

mand of traditional soul idioms, the man performs with plenty of emotion, but spends the entire album stuck in ballad mode, lost in a succession of reveries about the good old days, the sexual prowess of his lover and, on the title track, the day his wife gave him a son. There will be plenty of winning singles to choose from, but the cumulative effect is decidedly soporific.

JOE HENDERSON
Joe Henderson Big Band (Verve 533 451-2)
SINCE signing with Verve in 1991, Joe Henderson has rightfully been recognised as one of the music's most skilful, thoughtful tenor players, his cultured, musically approach, gracing projects ranging from a tribute to Miles Davis to explorations of the music of Billy Strayhorn and Antonio Carlos Jobim.

Big-band work, however, has not figured in his discography until now. Recorded in two bursts, the first in 1992 with a stellar New York line-up, the second in 1996 with Chick Corea an occasional guest, this album contains a number of Henderson's finest compositions — *Isotope*, which receives a

Massive attack

JAZZ ALBUMS

robust arrangement from Slide Hampton, *Black Narcissus* and the peppy latinate hard-bop staple *Recordame* among them — and subjects them to tasteful but robust workouts.

ERIC REED
Musicals (Impulse IMP 11962)
UNSURPRISINGLY, since he and a number of other musicians on this elegant album are alumni or current members of Wynton

Marsalis's various bands, pianist Eric Reed is steeped in the jazz tradition from New Orleans piano to avant-garde saxophone, from gospel through swing to hard bop and beyond.

Using two bands — a conventional piano trio and a quintet with a trumpet/alto front line — Reed explores all these areas in some varied but consistently cogent originals, ranging from a perky Art Blakey tribute, through a rollicking, percussive rumba dedicated to Professor Longhair, to the album's standout track: a dramatic trumpet/saxophone dialogue, *Pete and Repete*, intentionally reminiscent of the music of Ornette Coleman and Eric Dolphy.

CHRIS PARKER

Rock and a hard place

There's still this myth that runs along the lines of: "Being in a band isn't a job — it's a birrova laugh." And, on the surface, that would appear to be true: a pop star's life seems to consist of world travel, groupies, drink and drugs. There's the songwriting part as well, but as the process is so little talked about or discussed — mainly because it's exceedingly boring — that tends not to figure in people's preconceptions.

In actuality, a popstar's average, on-tour day consists of waking late, spending upwards of five hours travelling to the next venue, sound-checking, and then sitting around waiting to go onstage. There is the marvellous hour of playing to people who nominally understand where you're coming from, and wearing spangly trousers, then it's back to the hotel to sit around, missing lovers, children, family and friends, watching late-night TV, and drinking to bring you down from the adrenalin rush of being onstage.

The loneliness and boredom can overwhelm even the hardiest soul. Six months in foreign countries, unable to communicate, isolated from everyone you know save your band-mates, can trample the joy out of everything. Even playing on stage becomes a chore when you have to wheel out the same revelations and emotions night after night.

Time becomes a distorted measuring device when every day becomes a *Groundhog Day* of vans, hotels and draughty dressing rooms. Bands start marking the passage of time in places and countries — August is Japan, November is America, December is home. Living this way can lead to alcoholism and varying states of insanity.

But who cares? If bands are touring that extensively, they surely have some kind of success behind them, and are therefore making a fairly hefty packet of cash. Unfortunately, it's not that merry. Musicians are treated by their record companies like cowboys treated their horses when travelling across deserts — by day, they are ridden, at night, nicks are made in their veins and their blood is lapped for food. Horses can live for years like

Caitlin Moran
has some advice for anyone considering life as a pop star: forget it, Jim

this, until they eventually collapse.

Here are some facts: bands get between 6 and 12 per cent of the money earned on records. However, from this tiny percentage, certain deductions are made: the cost of making albums (even though, in many cases, the record company still owns the master tapes); TV ads; 50 per cent of the cost of making a video. If a "name" producer is employed for the album, he will often want a percentage of the profits, which is taken from the band.

On top of this, bands earn smaller royalties from any packaging novelty (postcards, two-CD singles packages), from selling their records through music clubs, or having their songs on compilation

albums. Record companies are in a no-lose situation: nearly everything is billed back to the band.

The upshot of this is that a band with three Top 20 hits and a Top Ten album under their belt could well be on a weekly wage of around £120 — and will owe about £50,000 to their record company.

I often wondered why so many pop stars branched out into less successful side careers within five years of becoming successful: acting, presenting, writing, merchandising or, in David Bowie's case, designing wallpaper. Well, I know now — emotionally and financially it's infinitely preferable to flogging your soul in 15 bright and shiny formats, across the world for 50p a go.

There are a multitude of reasons one might want to be a pop star. *Revenge is common*. Proving yourself is another. Simply being foolish enough to think it's fun is the favourite. But unless your one and only reason is that you have to get the music inside you to as many people as possible or you'll burst, then avoid entering the music industry as if your soul depended on it. It does.

TOP TEN ALBUMS

- 1 *Blue is the Colour*..... Beautiful South (Go! Discs)
- 2 *Greatest Hits*..... Simply Red (East West)
- 3 *A Different Beat*..... Boyzone (Polydor)
- 4 *Falling Into You*..... Celine Dion (Epic)
- 5 *Anthology 3*..... Beatles (Apple)
- 6 *Dance Into the Light*..... Phil Collins (Faced Value)
- 7 *Recurring Dream*..... Crowded House (Capitol)
- 8 *Ocean Drive*..... Lighthouse Family (Wild Card)
- 9 *Only Human*..... Dina Carroll (Mercury)
- 10 *The Score*..... Fugees (Columbia)

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Sir Ron goes shopping

The leader of the Dearing committee believes we can learn from Japan, says John O'Leary

When Sir Ron Dearing embarked on his review of higher education, the first place he went for ideas was Japan. This raised eyebrows on British campuses, where all but a select few Japanese universities are regarded as weak.

But on this visit at least, Sir Ron's interest was in quantity, not quality. Japan has reached the levels of participation in higher education to which a new British government is likely to aspire, and has done so without breaking the bank or creating widespread graduate unemployment.

Sir Ron returned impressed by the scale of Japan's achievement and convinced that there were some lessons to be learnt, not from the top universities, but from the lower regions of a highly stratified system. Like the politicians who commissioned him, he recognises the pressure for renewed expansion, but is determined to channel growth into productive areas. In all probability, that means a new generation of two-year courses, rather than yet more honours degrees. One possible model has been examined by the Dearing committee this month in America, where community colleges provide an established alternative to a university degree. The other is Japan's mixture of liberal arts and vocational colleges.

Though neither country closely parallels Britain's education system, Japan's is closer in some respects. In particular, with more than a third of school-leavers going on to university, Japan has a participation rate similar to Britain's. However, when the two-year colleges are added in, the rate hovers around 50 per cent. There lies the prize, but also

The leading universities certainly have high standards

the problem for the policy-makers: how to devise qualifications that carry sufficient status to attract students in an age when the degree is seen as the least that is required for an increasing swathe of jobs. The quandary is by no means unknown in Japan, where the female-dominated junior colleges are having to struggle for survival. But the relative success of the newer vocational colleges and the option of transferring to a university degree are ensuring that the system does not break down.

Sister Claudette Bernier, the president of Yokohama's Caritas Junior College, says: "We are facing a crisis because there is a tendency now for more girls to want to go to four-year universities. A social trend like that is difficult to counter."

The 596 colleges, mainly private and once akin to finishing schools, train students for primary teaching and nursing, but growing numbers choose to go on to university rather than settling for an associate degree. Sister Bernier says that smaller classes and a work ethic that is often absent in universities bring the best out of students who might otherwise drop out of education or have to settle for a lowly regarded degree.

Sir Ron liked the flexibility of the system, with its choice of stages at which to cash in qualifications, and also its breadth. At the 3,000 Special Training Colleges (also mainly private) students can join after junior high school and take a five-year course in vocational subjects alongside the basic curriculum.

The universities, too, give undergraduates a general education for the first half of their degree courses, specialising only in the final two



Tokyo students relaxing: Japan's higher education system impressed Sir Ron Dearing

years. There have been moves towards earlier specialisation, especially in some of the 400 private institutions; but the principle of giving students breadth of knowledge remains important throughout Japan's higher education.

In other respects, however, British academics' scepticism appears well-founded. Quality is highly variable and the Japanese method of funding universities and colleges, with high fees paid almost entirely by parents, will have little to commend it to members of Sir Ron's committee.

Indeed, the Japanese education ministry has a whole department devoted to university reform. There are demands for a more productive and diverse system to cater for the wider range of abilities and expectations in the larger student body of the 1990s.

There is also anxiety about the effects of demographic decline, which is starting to hit higher education and may bankrupt some institutions eventually. The population is expected to peak in 2011, leaving institutions to compete for far fewer students if present participation rates are maintained.

A traditional disdain for teaching among Japanese academics is said to have changed in recent years, and there is no doubt that the leading universities have high standards. But degrees are not classified and students' workload in most universities is less than onerous, so there is little incentive to shine.

Top companies limit their recruitment to universities at the top of a rigid ranking based almost entirely on entrance scores. So, having worked long and hard to win a

place, and with the prospect of a punishing working schedule to come, university life is seen as the one chance for the Japanese to enjoy themselves for a sustained period.

Both the universities and the Government are keen to expand postgraduate education, which has always been a minority interest. But most businesses remain wedded to the idea of training and moulding graduates according to their own requirements, and students are reluctant to turn down the chance of secure employment.

As in the schools, the Japanese are as keen to borrow from Britain as we are from them. A group is to visit Britain soon to collect its own tips on measuring and improving quality in higher education. The two systems may have a lot more in common before long.

How to look good in the league tables

Martin Stephen offers a survival guide for head teachers prepared to sacrifice their principles

Peter Wilkes is an excellent headmaster and one of my oldest friends, so I was particularly shocked to hear that he had lost his job as Head of Cheltenham College, apparently because his governors were dissatisfied with that school's performance in the league tables. Half the boys gained A or B grades and 20 got into Oxford or Cambridge.

There are four distinct types or categories of league table available to the consumer. All can be fiddled.

The easiest table of all will be published this month from the Government's official examination statistics. The positively byzantine rules and regulations take no account of large numbers of pupils who actually sit and pass GCSEs, while large numbers of pupils who, by age, qualify for GCSEs but who did not actually sit them, are counted as failures.

Just to show that idiocy does not stop at GCSE, the Government also includes General Studies A level as a proper A level in these statistics, even though no one else does. Very few good universities accept it as an entry requirement: none accepts it as the equivalent of a proper A level.

So lesson number one for the head who is keen to succeed is to enter everyone who can spell their own name for General Studies A level. It boosts the points score beyond belief.

After that, it gets a little harder, but not much. The main batch of league tables are based on the findings of ISIS (the Independent Schools Information Service). These do not include General Studies A level, but there is no need to panic.

The answer is simple, although it might take a couple of years to get up and

running. First response: if your school is selective, persuade the top half of your pupils to go for four A levels. Since the tables work by adding up the total points score achieved and dividing it by the number of pupils sitting A levels, you do not need a GCSE in mathematics to work this one out.

Of course, a lot of your entry might not be bright enough to sit a fourth A level. Worry not. In its wisdom, the Government has invented AS levels, equal to half an A level in terms of points scored. If your school is a little more comprehensive than some others, this is your answer. Many of those who can manage only an E

Lesson One: enter everyone for General Studies at A level

at A level can get a C grade at AS level, and even an F is still one more point. Make every one of your pupils sit an AS level, regardless of whether they want to or not, and just look at the way you bounce up the league tables.

Some weak-hearted colleagues and parents might complain, of course. Traditionally, only 75 per cent of the sixth-form curriculum has been given over to examined subjects. Time for that fourth A level or the AS level has to be taken away from the remaining 25 per cent. So goodbye to a stimulating General Studies programme that could not be examined.

One or two other league tables are a little more tricky. The *Daily Telegraph* one operates on grades A-B at A

level alone, so the General Studies or the AS tricks do not work, but the fourth A level, if one's entry is bright, works satisfactorily. The *Financial Times* is so complicated that even its own statistician does not seem to understand it, but ends up, year in and year out, proving the same thing as everyone else's league table.

But if you really want to hit the heights, you need to bite a few bullets. How could any reasonable head allow pupils through into his sixth form who were not guaranteed an A or a B grade at A level? If you have been a good head, you have probably allowed any pupil to stay on in your sixth form who is working reasonably hard, even if an F grade will for them be a major achievement.

This must change immediately: the pupil who will be lucky to get an F grade simply has to go. And while you are at it, refuse your weaker candidates the right to sit A levels with you. If you are really brave, fiddle the return to ISIS. Refuse to enter any examinations that are the subject of appeal — appeal meaning that you do not agree with the results.

The major things not to do? Do not enter 85 per cent of your candidates for only three A levels. Do not fail to enter them all for General Studies A level. Do not fail to enter them all for at least one A/S level. If you fail in any one of these areas, you are mad. Unfortunately, by that criterion, the Manchester Grammar School is certainly insane.

If Peter Wilkes had done all these things, he might still be Head of Cheltenham College after September.

● The author is High Master of the Manchester Grammar School.

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CRICKET

Stonewall Smith takes leave of hot seat at Lord's

By Alan Lee, Cricket Correspondent

ALAN SMITH, very much the face and voice of English cricket administration during the past decade of hectic evolution, left his office at Lord's for the last time yesterday. The retiring Smith is succeeded by Tim Lamb, who will become the initial chief executive of the English Cricket Board when it replaces the Test and County Cricket Board (TCCB) on January 1.

Smith, 60 last week, has spent all his adult years in cricket, the past 20 of them in administration, which is an abiding mystery to him for he confidently expected to go into advertising "after a couple of years of county cricket".

He played six Test matches for England on the 1962-63 tour of Australia and New Zealand. A wicketkeeper-batsman, he would occasionally switch to bowling at medium-pace, off the wrong foot, and once removed his pads to claim a hat-trick against Essex at Clacton.

After 11 years as secretary of Warwickshire, Smith was ap-

pointed as the TCCB's first chief executive in 1987. Having served as a selector and tour manager, and on various committees, he was seen as a natural choice, not least for his gift of stonewalling diplomacy. The credit with which he emerges from his post is demonstrated by the rare honour of a farewell dinner in the Long Room on November 12.

He has frequently likened his duties to those of a civil servant and accepts that he

acquired unpopularity, especially among those who hardly knew him, through the misconception that he wielded personal power, rather than acting as a mouthpiece for the disparate Board structure. This regularly obliged him to represent views and decisions with which he disagreed, something he carried off with such consummate skill that he invariably got the blame when things went awry.

A man of honesty, integrity and far more warmth than he has usually been credited with, Smith admits: "I am sure I made mistakes from time to time, probably too many, and I have not always enjoyed the job, especially when the England team has done poorly. But I have always slept well because there are a lot of nice people in this game."

Smith has been a creature of routine, habitually arriving at Lord's before 9am and seldom leaving before 7.30pm. He preferred to keep his family home, first in Warwickshire and latterly in the Cotswolds, rather than uproot to London and, although he is looking forward to a degree of retirement — "improving my golf and trying to do the garden" — he will not be lost to the game.

"Cricket is in my blood and I shall always be involved. I intend to take a couple of months for myself, in which I shall not consider any offers, but I don't feel ready to stop work entirely and I am sure I shall be doing something next year."

"Contrary to popular opinion, I never had time to watch cricket while doing this job and I am looking forward to doing that now, especially getting around some county championship games. I shall also spend some time in the Lord's library, because I am fascinated by the history of the game." It would be surprising, however, if Smith, widely misunderstood and underestimated, does not reappear in a more official capacity come next summer.



Smith: staying involved

England A indebted to composed Shah

OWAIS SHAH, the highly regarded Middlesex teenager, scored an assured 76 to prevent England A from starting their tour of Australia in dismal fashion yesterday.

Shah, 18, hit 11 fours and was comfortably the top scorer as England A limped to 155 for nine in 69.2 overs on the first day of their four-day match against a New South Wales XI in Tamworth. Play was ended 90 minutes early by a hailstorm.

Craig White, of Yorkshire, made the only other notable contribution, scoring 33 in a 60-run partnership with Shah, but the remainder of England A's batsmen failed to trouble an inexperienced side.

Stuart MacGill, rated by many Australians as their best spinner behind Shane

Warne, claimed four for 43, while Dave Freedman, the left-arm spinner, took two for 21. MacGill included 13 maidens in his two spells, and accounted for Mark Butcher with a superb flipper.

ENGLAND A: First Innings
M A Butcher b MacGill 13
J E R Gatten b MacGill 13
A MacGill b White 13
O A Shah c Hayward b Freedman 76
A J Hoddinott c Gatten b MacGill 11
C White b Freedman 33
J W K Hogg c White b MacGill 3
A F Giles c MacGill b MacGill 1
G Chapman c MacGill b Thompson 1
D W Hogg not out 0
M Butcher not out 0
Total 155 (69.2 overs)
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-21, 2-21, 3-25, 4-30, 5-120, 6-127, 7-149, 8-155, 9-155.
BOWLING: MacGill 10-9-21-2; Clark 7-0-28-0; MacGill 25-10-24-4; Thompson 7-2-20-1; Freedman 20-2-41-2.
NEW SOUTH WALES XI: "MT" Hayward, J L Anderson, S Clark, S A Thompson, G MacGill, A MacGill, A McQuinn, G Rimmer, H C Glascock, P Alley, D A Hughes, S Jassal and I Emerson.



Magnus Gustafsson, of Sweden, piling on the pressure on his way to defeating the seeded Wayne Ferreira

Edberg on course to bow out in style

FROM ALIX RAMSAY IN PARIS

IN WHAT has become a distinctly thin field, Stefan Edberg has become the sentimental favourite for the Paris Open title. It has been a strange week so far, with the top players looking tired, out of sorts or just plain bored as the season draws to a close.

But, for Edberg, there is still everything to play for. He has only the rest of his week in Paris, next week in Stockholm and the Davis Cup final left before he retires and he wants to end his impressive career with a win.

With the favourites continuing to crash out — Wayne Ferreira, Todd Martin and Felix Mantilla all failed to reach the quarter-finals yesterday, leaving only four seeded players — Edberg must feel

that he has a real chance. Yet, playing Feron Wibier, from Holland, a chap whose greatest claim to fame this year is a runner's-up spot at the Manchester Challenger tournament, the Swede, too, was in danger of missing the boat.

Given his chance to play in front of a big crowd for big money and big ranking points, Wibier soon shook off his initial stage fright and relaxed to take the first set and an early lead in the second.

At the age of 25, Wibier is a late starter in tennis at the top level. He is ranked No 211 in the world and, throughout his career, he never managed to break out of that bracket. Things got worse last year as he dropped to No 480, so he decided to change tack. He started working with Rohan Goetzke, Richard Krajicek's coach, and went back to his

studies. Happy with life, his tennis improved and he began to qualify for bigger events, including the Paris Open.

However, when it came to time to go quietly, he finally found a way past Wibier's service to level the second set at 3-3 and then started to move

"I am not going to have many more opportunities," he said. "I would be happy to go out with a win at any one of the tournaments — this week, next week or Davis Cup."

Yevgeny Kafelnikov, the No 4 seed, quickly followed up Edberg's success. He took a little over an hour to dispose of Maliwa Washington, seeded 13, 6-4, 6-3 and put himself on course for a Paris double. Five months ago he beat Michael Stich at Roland Garros to claim his first grand slam title and last night he never looked likely to be troubled.

Meanwhile, the British interest in Paris may have ended on the opening night with the departure of Tim Henman, but next week promises more. Henman will play in Moscow while Greg Rusedski has gained direct entry into the Stockholm Open.

Results 44

IN BRIEF

Fairclough aims to finish with flourish

LORA FAIRCLOUGH, of Britain, is strongly placed to overturn a disappointing season after an opening round of 70 in the Spanish golf open at La Manga Club yesterday. The Lancashire player is in a chasing group of five, one stroke behind Caryn Louw, the South African leader.

Fairclough's form slumped earlier this year as she unsuccessfully tried to retain her Solheim Cup place. She said: "I was devastated missing out, but I put too much pressure on myself. But life is fun again now. I hit 17 greens in regulation today and dropped only one shot, when I drove into a bunker at the 11th hole."

Trish Johnson, the tournament favourite, looking for her fourth victory of the year, is three strokes off the lead after a round of 72.

Syed drops out

Table tennis: Matthew Syed has pulled out of the England team for the Italian Open, starting in Bolzano today. The England No 1, who has a leg injury, hopes to be fit for the European League promotion clash with Slovakia on November 8. However, Carl Prean makes his comeback in Italy for England after a 17-month absence.

Change at top

Squash: For the first time in nearly four years, positions at the top of women's international squash have changed, with Sarah FitzGerald, Australia's new world open champion, taking top position on the new WSA world ranking list. Cassandra Jackson, of England, moves up to third. WOMEN'S WORLD TOP 10: 1, S FitzGerald (Aus); 2, M Martin (Aus); 3, C Jackson (Eng); 4, S Hurrell (Eng); 5, S Wright (Eng); 6, L Irving (Aus); 7, C Owens (Aus); 8, S Schone (Ger); 9, C Nich (SA); 10, F Gosses (Eng).

Pullin through

Tennis: Julie Pullin, from Sussex, who beat Clare Wood, the national champion, 6-2, 6-1 yesterday, will meet Denisa Chladkova, the No 1 seed, from the Czech Republic, in the quarter-finals of the LTA Ladies Challenger in Edinburgh today.

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THE TIMES FRIDAY NOVEMBER 1 1996

Capacity crowd at Ibrox just the ticket for Brown

By KEVIN MCCARRA

THE Scotland team and the great football audience have long led separate lives. Supporters in search of excitement threw themselves into an affair with clubs that could buy exotic players. Now, though, there are signs of a return to the old relationship.

All 50,000 tickets for Scotland's World Cup qualifying match against Sweden at Ibrox on November 10 have been sold. It will be the largest crowd attracted by the national side to a match in its own country since 65,204 were drawn to Hampden Park for a 2-0 victory over France in March 1989.

An enlightened pricing policy accounts for some of the allure that the game possesses, since adult tickets cost only £10 and there are special offers for children. Nonetheless, the sales figure for a match that is to be shown live by the BBC is remarkable.

Staff at the Scottish Football Association have been besieged by telephone calls from people who are clearly unfamiliar with the practice of buying Scotland tickets, and when Craig Brown yesterday announced his squad, his selection will have been met with greater interest than for many years. His

team is, abruptly, winning recognition as the sole embodiment of competence in Scottish football.

On Wednesday, Rangers, despite their plight, lost 1-0 at home to Ajax, leaving them with a record of four defeats in the Champions' League and a place in the last eight of the European Cup no longer even an arithmetical possibility. On Tuesday, Brondby removed Aberdeen from the UEFA Cup. The involvement of Celtic and Heart of Midlothian in European competition ended several weeks ago. Anyone who yearns to see Scots get the better of foreign opponents, therefore, had better develop the habit of watching Scotland.

Brown's reactions yesterday were indicative of a man who is not accustomed to being at the centre of his country's attention. "The news of the ticket sales is a boost," he

said, "but it also leaves us with a responsibility."

"Each person who comes to the game must go away happy. That means they have to see a victory and a good performance. We can't blow it. The last thing we need is an anticlimax."

His side has the opportunity to nurture the kind of patriotic enthusiasm that was so overwhelming in the 1970s and 1980s. Scotland possessed a more talented group of players in that era, but Brown's team, with diligence and preparation, has proved just as effective.

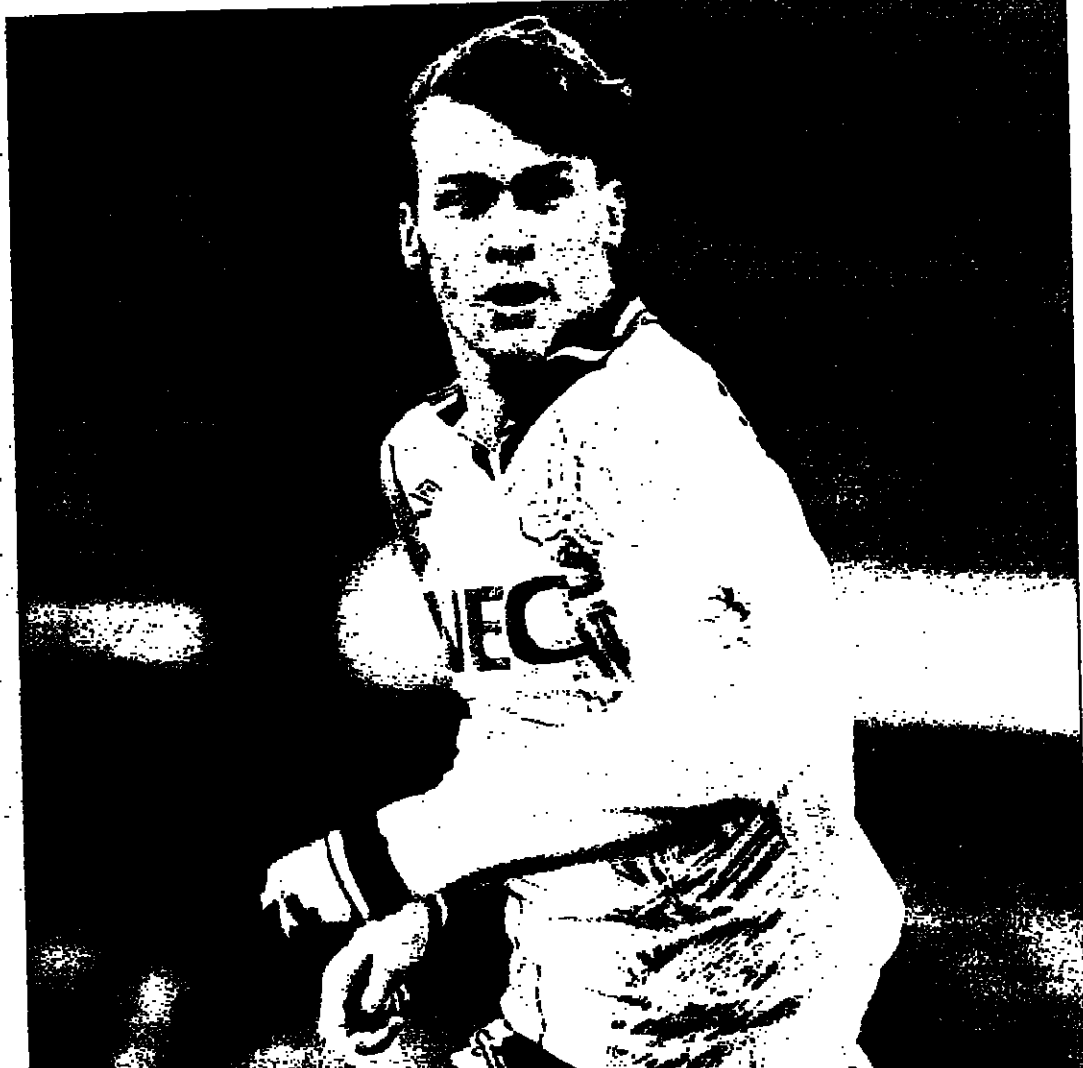
In group four of the World Cup qualifiers, they had drawn in Austria and won in Latvia before the farce in Estonia, where the opposition declined to turn up after the kick-off: time was altered at short notice. Given such progress, Brown is in no mood for tinkering

with his squad. The only hint of daring came with the inclusion of Duncan Ferguson, who has not appeared for Everton since undergoing a groin operation and serving a suspension. The manager expects that he will play against Coventry City on Monday.

Brown hopes that others, too, will be able to prove their fitness before the match with Sweden. Andy Gorman, Ally McCoist and Colin Hendry have yet to return to full action with their clubs. Brown's patience, however, is understandable: given the part they have played in Scotland's success.

The most unlikely member of that trio to play a part against Sweden is Hendry. A groin operation ruled him out of the match against Latvia, and it takes considerable optimism to believe that he can demonstrate his full recovery for Blackburn Rovers against Liverpool on Sunday.

McCoist came on as a substitute against Ajax and, as Brown put it, "doesn't need to be fit to score goals". Gorman is still troubled by a hip injury, and if his place is taken by Jim Leighton, the Hibernian goalkeeper will win his 75th cap. John Hughes, 32, the Celtic centre half, was sold to Hibernian yesterday for £300,000.



Ferguson's recall for the match against Sweden represents Scotland's only selection gamble

Jocular giant who lacks brotherly love

Brian Glanville on the deteriorating relationship between the Charltons

THE sub-title of Jack Charlton's pungent autobiography might well be *Sibling Rivalry*. Not on the football field, or in the classroom. In both areas, natural talent put Bobby well ahead of Jack. On tour with England a quarter of a century ago, Jack was wont to say: "There's no comparison between Our Kid and me."

A mother's love is quite another, deeper, matter. It surpasses anything that transpires as a footballer. Jack, as he characteristically confesses in his book, sought it endlessly. Bobby achieved it effortlessly, only — and this seems the true source of Jack's bitterness — to cast it away. "We've never been further apart than now," Jack said recently. "I just don't want to know him."

This is because, in the last years of their strong, ebullient mother, Cissie — once a street footballer herself, sister of the footballing Milburn brothers, cousin of the great Jackie — Bobby stayed away. He was not with her when she was dying in a nursing home, though he did come back from Tunisia to be a pall bearer at her funeral.

Judge not. The twists and turns, the agonies and complexities, of families are obscure to the outsider. Jack seems to suggest that bad relations between Cissie and Bobby's wife, Norma, were at the root of the schism, though he is at pains to point out that Norma did nothing to stop Bobby visiting his mother. The pattern seems a familiar, even a classic, one. The strong mother, unwilling to let go. The favoured son, striking out, eventually, on his own, perhaps over-compensating in the process.

That might explain the sad little anecdote that Jack tells, of Cissie and her husband, the overshadowed Bob, arriving for a match at Old Trafford, having been invited by Sir Matt Busby, only to be met by Bobby.

"Instead of being pleased to see them, he went mad. 'What are you doing here? Don't ever come here again unless I tell you.'"

Bobby, unquestionably, was traumatised by the horrors of the Munich air crash in February 1958, when so many of his Manchester United team-mates died, and he himself was miraculously thrown out into an adjacent field, still strapped into his seat.

Perceptively, Jack wonders whether Bobby was assailed by what might be called *Survivor Syndrome*, noted in those who emerged from concentration camps with a growing sense of guilt. "I will remember Bobby," a

few months after the Munich crash, in Gothenburg, for a World Cup in which he did not get a game. "I suddenly emerged from his sorrows, in England's hotel, to tell the tale of a northeastern bus queue. The bus arrived, full up. A would-be passenger inquired: 'How long will the next one be?' The conductor replied: 'It will be here in five minutes.'"

Jack asserts that Bobby "stopped smiling, a trait which continues to this day". Which is not true, however unsmiling, Bobby may be when he meets his brother. Meet him yourself, as I did recently, and you find a quiet, genial charm that has typified him, ever, since he finally emerged from his Munich nightmares.

Jack's book is generally as outspoken as you would expect it to be. He has always been a humorous fellow. He says you when I'm playing for Leeds, he once told me, in England's hotel in Mexico. "When I'm playing for England, I have to tolerate you!"

Then there was the occasion, rolling along the Rio de Janeiro seafront to the airport, after a game against Brazil, when he read out, on the intercom, a mock report for the EA News on an ill-fated English press game. "Brian Glanville: seems to have some idea of playing centre half. Unfortunately something has been lost in transmission. Should come to me for advice."

David Miller, his centres constituted a grave menace to travellers climbing Sugar Loaf Mountain.

He admits he was a surly rebel in his early days at Leeds United, admits that they were an abrasive team in Don Revie's own early managerial days. He excoriates Frank Stapleton for his alleged sulking at the 1990 World Cup with Ireland and accuses Peter Beardsley of never accepting advice.

He treats Revie with excessive indulgence, and does not quite come clean about the great gulf in their relative philosophies, which eventually separated him from Ireland's Arsenal pair, Liam Brady and David O'Leary. They wanted to play more creative football, he wanted the ball played up fast and long.

Given what he achieved with Ireland, who can say that his realpolitik was mistaken. Wrong and romantic, right and repulsive, you might say, as *1968 And All That* said of the Cavaliers and Roundheads. To which Charlton might well reply: "If you want to see my monument, look around you."

*Jack Charlton: the autobiography — with Peter Byrne (Partridge Press, £16.99)



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CRICKET 41

Smith retires from the front line at Lord's

SPORT

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 1 1996

RACING 42

Why the locals are running scared in Melbourne



England coach has more than Georgia on his mind as he ponders squad

Hoddle facing dilemma over Gascoigne

By Russell Kempson

SHOULD he or shouldn't he? Will he or won't he? English football's great debate and Glenn Hoddle's great dilemma, over the selection or not of Paul Gascoigne for the World Cup qualifying match against Georgia next Saturday, will be resolved today.

Hoddle, the England coach, announces his squad for the group two game in Tbilisi against a backdrop of discontent and moral righteousness. Everybody, it appears, has an opinion on whether Gascoigne should play; many, it appears, would rather he stayed at home.

Yet again, it is not purely the Rangers midfielder player's footballing ability that is being questioned, though his indifferent recent form further complicates the debate. It is not a case of judging him solely on his state of physical readiness for what will undoubtedly prove an awkward, possibly intimidating, journey into the former Soviet Union state.

What has caused such indignation in high places is that, three weeks ago, Gascoigne allegedly struck his wife, Sheryl. Photographs of her apparently bruised face were given widespread coverage in the national media and, only a few days later, Gascoigne again attracted unfavourable headlines during Rangers' European Cup Champions' League game against Ajax in Amsterdam.

After only 38 minutes, he kicked out wildly at Winston Bogarde, the Ajax defender, and was sent off. He later apologised for his tantrum, adding that he should not have taken his problems on to the pitch. It is the nearest he has come to admitting that, indeed, there had been an altercation with his wife. He has, though, never denied the reports.

Women's groups, predictably, have expressed outrage, saying that Gascoigne should not be considered. Their protests have found widespread support, with the Football

Association, in response, having deemed the matter serious enough to call in Keith Wiseman, its chairman, to give Hoddle guidance.

Wiseman, a Hampshire coroner, is used to passing calm, composed judgments. It is the first such highly charged and highly sensitive issue that he has had to deal with since taking office during the summer and, with condemnation of Gascoigne coming from all quarters, it will need a deliberate, dispassionate assessment.

Hoddle met with Wiseman yesterday, when they mulled over the pros and cons of selecting England's perennial problem child. Hoddle, who has previously stressed the importance of discipline among his players, will have the final say. "A decision will be made only after I have spoken to Glenn," Wiseman said. He gave no indication of his personal stance.

Hoddle has kept his own counsel, too. Even after the squad is revealed today, it is unlikely that he will go too deeply into his reasoning behind Gascoigne's inclusion or omission. He will skillfully steer the conversation on to less controversial areas, a more positive agenda, and discuss the importance of the Georgia game in England's quest to reach the 1998 World Cup finals in France.

Hidden beneath all the moralising, almost obscured yet intricately and ironically linked to Hoddle's thinking on Gascoigne, is the likelihood that Tony Adams, the Arsenal defender, and Ian Wright, the Arsenal striker, will return to the England fold.

In the absence of Gary Pallister and Alan Shearer, who are ruled out by knee injuries, Adams and Wright can expect the call. Yet is not Adams a recently self-confessed alcoholic, who has served time in jail for drink-driving offences? And is not Wright one of the sport's less endearing characters, who faces an FA disrepute charge for making derogatory personal remarks about David Pleat, the Sheffield Wednesday manager?

And what of Paul Merson, the Arsenal midfielder, who will surely retain his place in the squad? His past misfortunes involving drink, drugs and gambling have been well chronicled.

Hoddle, when making his England selections, should not have to take into consideration such off-the-field exploits. He should not have to juggle political football or have to differentiate between alleged wife-beating, various addictions and other behavioural problems.

Sadly, in a PC world, those days have long gone.

United's future 44
Ferguson recalled 45

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Sadly, in a PC world, those days have long gone.



The question of Gascoigne's inclusion has been the focus of Hoddle's attention

Lewis is offered world title bout in London

By Srikanth Sen
Boxing Correspondent

DON KING, the American promoter, has given Lennox Lewis two dates and venues for his bout with Oliver McCall for the vacant World Boxing Council (WBC) heavy-weight championship: January 10 in Nashville, Tennessee, and February 8 in London.

King's contracts arrived yesterday at the London offices of Panos Eliades, Lewis's chief negotiator and backer, just two days after a New Jersey judge told King and José Sulaiman, the president of the WBC, to appear before him to explain why the court order to give Lewis a bout with McCall by December 26 had not been obeyed.

King rang Eliades and asked him to call off the court action, which Lewis's American attorney, Patrick English, said could cost King and the WBC millions in damages. Eliades told King he would not be able to end the action unless King agreed to certain demands:

1. Cast-iron terms for a bout with Mike Tyson.

2. Lewis to be allowed one voluntary defence if he beats McCall. Henry Akinwande, a King heavyweight, who has been installed at No 3 in the WBC rankings, should not be the mandatory challenger.

3. King to pay a penalty of \$2 million if he fails to put on the bout on the given dates.

4. \$4.6 million, which Lewis is receiving as his purse, to be lodged in a bank in letters of credit.

5. The cost of the court action that should never have been necessary be paid by King.

6. Names of the judges and referee for the Lewis-McCall contest to be given to Eliades well in advance.

7. One other stipulation which Eliades could not reveal to anyone at the moment.

Eliades said: "It's a breach of a court order. King and Sulaiman must appear in person before Judge Amos Saunders on November 14. So I am not in any hurry to call off the action. The nearer it gets to the time for them to face Judge Saunders the more chance I have to get what I want."

In a late attempt to revive its bid for the national stadium, Manchester yesterday announced plans for an 80,000 all-seater stadium with retractable roof that would cost £310 million and generate 3,000 new jobs.

Gwyn Roberts, chairman of Liffeshall said: "We will look at some of the mistakes made in the early days by the Australian Academy at Canberra, and try to learn from that." Any benefit to Australian sport took ten years.

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Bids lodged for £100m funding to create elite Academy

By David Miller

By the deadline yesterday, 25 bids to create the British Academy of Sport had been lodged with the Department of National Heritage.

While we wait for the department to reveal the candidates for £100 million of Lottery funding, the British Olympic Association (BOA) will announce on Monday, at the House of Commons, the bid with which it is in specific partnership. The BOA rightly believes that it should form the management of elite national sport at the Academy.

Craig Reddie, chairman of the BOA, said yesterday: "The bid with which we wish to be partners has the vision most equal to our own." Contrary to several of the bids, which seek to exploit existing facilities, the proposed BOA partnership envisages a green-field site, where facilities in training, coaching, physiotherapy, biomechanics, sports science and medicine will be established that are superior to anything presently in Britain.

The Central Consortium bid by Nottingham-Loughborough and Liffeshall would be based on the use of existing facilities at Holme Pierrepont (water sports), Loughborough University and the Liffeshall national training centre.

Sir Nigel Rudd, the chairman, said confidently that their offer would improve performances at the Sydney Olympics in 2000 — "they couldn't be worse" [than this year]. In fact, the true effect of any Academy appointed is bound to be long-term.

The Central Consortium may have difficulty over planning permission for its main site, however, while Loughborough's aim is clearly to expand the present scope of the university.

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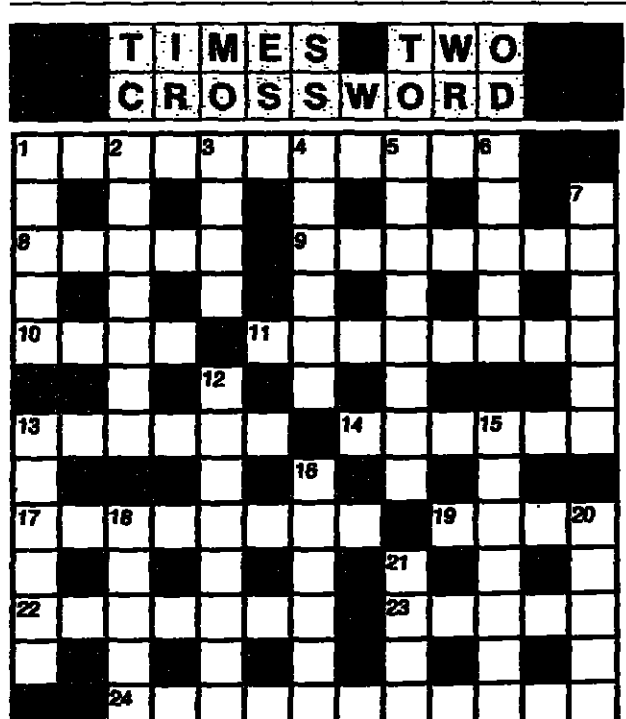
Pallister ruled out

MANCHESTER United's grim week got worse yesterday when Gary Pallister had an operation on the knee injury which has been troubling him since the match at Derby County in early September (Peter Ball writes). He will be out for five weeks.

"We could have tried to patch him up and keep him going for the game against Juventus," Alex Ferguson, the United manager, said yesterday, "but there was always the risk that he would break

down. Instead we hope we'll have him back for the game in Vienna on December 4."

That game, United's last in the Champions' League, could prove decisive for United's hopes of becoming the first English club to reach the quarter-finals of the European Cup for 11 years. Pallister has been noticeably struggling with the injury in recent weeks, and he was taken off during United's 6-3 defeat by Southampton at The Dell a week ago.



No 928

- ACROSS
- Explode with rage (4,4,3)
 - Leans over; parts of feet (5)
 - Make up, create (7)
 - Sheltered retreat (4)
 - Indulged; given undue help (5,3)
 - Conventional action (6)
 - Poor person (6)
 - Melted (8)
 - Rich, upper-class man (6,4)
 - Captured (6)
 - Mozart Symphony 35 (7)
 - Unconcoiled (5)
 - Rabies (11)
- DOWN
- Brendan — Ir. playwright (5)
 - Burdensome (7)
 - E. Eng. river, sounds like slime (4)
 - Get safely away (6)
 - Of this world (not the net) (8)
 - Demonstration (5)
 - Translate, present (6)
 - Captured (6)
 - Traditional saying (7)
 - Unconventional person (6)
 - US non-self-incrimination amendment (5)
 - Islamic decree (5)
 - Ark builder (4)

The solution to 927 will be published Wednesday, November 6

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